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GENTLEMAN GEORGE; or, PARLOR, PRISON, STAGE AND STREET.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.



"CAN I SPEAK A FEW WORDS WITH YOU, PLEASE?" SAID THE SOFT, WOMANLY VOICE.

GENTLEMAN GEORGE.

CHAPTER I.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO.

A STATELY mansion situated in the center of a park-like estate, near Sixty-first street, New York, in the year 1852.

At this time the Central Park had only been talked of, and houses were few and far between above Fiftieth street.

The shades of evening had come, and lights were flashing gayly from the windows of the mansion.

It was evident that some festive occasion was at hand, for carriage after carriage rolled in at the broad entrance-way and deposited loads of human freight—ladies decked in silks and satins, and gentlemen in full dress of the time—at the door of the brilliantly illuminated house.

The best people of New York entered the wide portal of the stately mansion that night. It was no common occurrence that had called forth the leaders of "society."

Twenty-one years ago New York society was vastly different from what it is at the present time. The days of oil and shoddy had not then come, and millionaires did not spring up, like Aladdin's palace, in a single night.

Two scions of two old New York families were to become one that night. Money was to marry money, and "blood" was to ally itself to "blood."

The bride claimed descent from the old one-legged Governor of New Amsterdam, and the groom from the Patroons of Ulster County.

The richly-furnished parlors were crowded with guests. At eight the ceremony was to take place, and, as it lacked but a few minutes of the hour, the arrival of the minister was momentarily expected.

And while they waited for the coming of the minister, and showered congratulations upon the blue-eyed bride, whose fair, round face, all red and white, gave ample proof of her German descent, and upon the tall and handsome bridegroom, whose upright carriage and haughty air fully revealed that birth and breeding had not been wasted upon him, a strange scene was taking place in the carriage-way that led to the house.

A slender female form, clad in a plain dark dress, looking not unlike a lady's maid, had stolen up the carriage-way from the street, and, halting within the shadow of the trees that lined the pathway, gazed earnestly toward the door of the mansion, from whence streamed a circle of light. And then she looked toward the open windows of the parlor, which fronted on the path. Through the curtains of lace she could look into the room; could see the fair young bride in her silk-ens wedding dress, with the orange blossoms wreathed in her yellow hair, and the tall and handsome bridegroom in his suit of black.

Then pressing forward a step, still eagerly gazing, the light streaming from the windows fell upon her and revealed a little, simple, girlish face, brown-black eyes—that now are flashing wild with passion's fires—brown hair, drawn back from the low white forehead and simply braided, a slender figure, slight and graceful as the swaying willow branch. But now the girlish face was distorted with passion as she gazed upon the wedding-guests assembled within the mansion, and, as her eyes fell upon the tall and manly figure of the bridegroom, bitter, revengeful words came from between her firm-set teeth; she clenched her little white hand and shook it with menace toward the gleesome throng within the house.

Under her arm the girl bore a heavy pasteboard box, in size about a foot wide by two feet long.

One of the servants coming to the door and looking down the carriage-way, evidently sent to see if he could hear the sound of the minister's carriage-wheels, interrupted the muttered words of the woman.

Stepping forward a pace or two, she called to the servant and beckoned him to approach.

Somewhat astonished at the call, the man obeyed the summons.

"I've a present here for the bride," the girl said, smiling pleasantly in the face of the attendant; "it is to be a surprise for her. It's from Miss Van Curaer, but she doesn't wish it known that she sent it. Will you have the kindness to take it in to the bride, and here's five dollars for your trouble. Give it to her so that she can open it before the guests, and be sure not to say any thing about who it comes from."

"Oh, certainly, Miss," replied the man, taking the pasteboard box under his arm, and slipping the gold-piece into his pocket with a great deal of cheerfulness; "I'll take it in to her right away, and you can depend upon my keeping a still tongue in my head."

"Give it to her at once, and be careful; it's very valuable," the girl said, with a charming smile.

"Yes, Miss; much obliged to you," and then the servant retraced his steps to the house, carrying the pasteboard box under his arm. It was quite weighty, and the man guessed at once that it contained some rare and costly ornament.

After giving the box into the hands of the servant the girl had turned and gone down the carriage-way toward the gate, but, as the man entered the door, she turned suddenly, and, plunging into the shrubbery, rushed madly toward the house. From behind the shelter of a cluster of bushes she could gaze into the brilliantly lighted parlors and yet remain concealed from observation.

With glaring eyes and a rigid face she looked upon the happy wedding-party.

The servant entered the parlor, bearing the box carefully under his arm, and, with a beaming smile upon his stolid face, approached the bride.

All the guests turned and looked in wonder.

"I beg your pardon, Miss," he said; "a young person has just brought this box for you, and says as how it's a surprise and that it is to be opened right away."

This strange announcement created considerable astonishment, but the bride, entering into the spirit of the jest, took the box into her own fair hands without a word and removed the cover.

The wedding guests crowded close around, and even the tall and handsome bridegroom came near, with a look of careless wonder upon his face.

The cover removed and the contents of the box exposed to view, an exclamation of surprise came from all. The color faded from the cheeks of the bride, while the face of the bridegroom grew livid with rage.

Within the box was an infant, fast asleep.

The guests looked at each other in wonder, while the servant who had brought the box gazed open-mouthed in supreme astonishment.

"Oh, dear!" cried the bride, in helpless amazement.

"This is a sorry jest!" exclaimed the groom, in hot rage.

"Take away the creature!" said the mother of the bride.

One person alone of all the company seemed not to wonder at the strange circumstance, and he was the father of the bridegroom.

Coolly, and as if regarding the affair only as a common matter, he bade the servant remove the infant.

"Some heartless woman, unable to rear her child, has taken advantage of our happy gathering here to-night to thrust her burden upon our charities, but there are plenty of poor-houses in the country without our having to trouble ourselves about this beggar's foundling. Take it away, John; carry it down to the nearest station-house and leave it there."

The servant obeyed the command, but, though the "surprise" had departed, yet the effect remained to cast a damper upon the spirits of that gay company.

Through the open window the words of the cold and haughty merchant-prince had come to the ears of the woman concealed behind the cluster of bushes.

A moment she glared into the room, and saw the servant with the babe, and then down on both knees she dropped and lifted her thin, white hand to heaven, while her eyes flashed with demoniac fire.

"Oh, God in heaven, hear me curse this race! Let me live until I see them die, one by one, in speechless agony; curse the father—curse the son and the proud and haughty girl whom he will wed to-night—curse the child that bears his blood within its little veins, and whom he now permits to be given to the cold mercies of the world!"

The stars looked down and gleamed coldly as they listened to the passionate words.

Does the Great Ruler ever hear or heed the curses invoked by mortals?

CHAPTER II.

THE TEETH OF THE RATS.

OUT in the stream, with her head to the tide, lay the good ship Golden Dragon, one of the Liverpool liners.

On the first day of May, 1873, the Golden Dragon would heave her anchor up from the mud of the North river and turn her prow homeward toward the chalky cliffs of Old England.

The cargo was all on board; in the morning the crew would come, and then, farewell to New York bay.

Captain Drummond, commander of the Golden Dragon, had been to dinner with the agent of the line, and at nine o'clock in the evening, on the last day of April, he had been escorted down to the dock by a jovial party, and getting into the boat, had been pulled out to his ship.

The worthy Briton had "punished" considerable champagne, before and after dinner, and though his head was of the hardest texture, like to England's walls of oak, yet, as he ascended the side of his ship, and glanced upward at the sky, he saw more stars than were usually wont to shine there.

The first mate and two sailors were in charge of the ship the rest of the crew had not yet come aboard. The captain exchanged a few words with the mate, and then, bidding his officer good-night, descended to his cabin and prepared to retire.

As the head of the worthy captain felt a little queer, he fixed himself a glass of brandy-and-soda—ever the favorite tipple of the male natives of the "tight little island"—and dispatching it, tumbled into his berth.

Soon the captain was safe in the arms of "Murphy"—to "Irishize" the god of sleep.

How long he slept he knew not, when he was suddenly awoken by a dazzling light flashed upon his eyes. In astonishment he looked around him.

Four men, roughly clad, and wearing black masks over their faces, surrounded him. One held a bull's-eye lantern, so that the glare fell full upon his eyes, while another presented a cocked revolver at his head.

The other two midnight intruders were a few paces back of the first two; each carried a weapon in his hand.

At the first glance the captain of the *Golden Dragon* realized his position.

The "Rats of the River" had taken possession of his ship. Although he had never encountered the terrible river thieves before, though he had followed the sea, man and boy, for forty years, yet he had heard too often of the operations of the Rats, as the half-pirates were generally termed, not to recognize them at once.

Drummond understood at a glance that resistance was useless; what could one unarmed man do against four assailants, fully provided with weapons?

"Well, what can I do for you, gentlemen?" Drummond asked, coolly, finding that the masked men did not speak.

"We want a little information," said the man who held the revolver to the head of the captain, and who was evidently the leader of the gang.

"Gentlemen, I must say that you really have such persuasive ways with you that I shall only be too glad to give you any information in my power," the Englishman said, coolly and calmly, yet inwardly chafing at his position.

"You are a sensible man, Captain Drummond," the leader of the masked men replied, with a light laugh. "I wish that it was our good fortune to always meet with such agreeable men as yourself to do business with. Of course you understand that we call upon you solely upon business."

"I presume so," the sailor said, "although I must remark that I do not understand what you can find on board of my ship that will be of value to you. I do not suppose that barrels of flour and such stuff will be of much use to gentlemen of your kidney."

"We won't trouble your flour, captain," the tall masked man said, laughing; "in fact, we won't trouble your cargo at all. We want the diamond jewelry that you are carrying over as a present to Mrs. Inglis. Myself and friends are altogether too good Americans to permit such valuable articles to go out of the country to adorn the wife of a foreign subject. Besides, the canny Scotchman has money enough of his own to buy jewels for his wife."

The burly Englishman felt a cold perspiration break out all over him.

"Gentlemen, you are laboring under some great mistake," he cried, hastily.

"Captain Drummond, do not take the trouble to lie to us," the leader of the Rats said, slowly and sternly. "Let me convince you that you can not deceive us. You dined with Mr. Adam Duncan, at his house in Thirtieth street, to-day. After his wife and daughter retired from the table, and left you and your host to your wine, he produced a small packet, wrapped up in white paper and securely sealed. This he intrusted to you, with instructions to give it into the hands of Mrs. Inglis, with his compliments, and at the same time he informed you that the packet contained a set of diamond jewelry valued at two thousand dollars."

The captain stared in astonishment, but did not attempt to reply.

"Just after dinner a party of Mr. Duncan's friends came in, and they all accompanied you to the dock. It was rather a lucky thing for you, captain, that you had an escort down," the robber said, reflectively, "or else we should have tried to relieve you of the diamond set on your way to the dock, and possibly we should have been compelled to have hurt you a little; but now we can arrange things without any trouble. Just hand over the articles, or tell us where they are, and we will depart instanter."

The Englishman's face flushed a deep red, and he set his thick lips resolutely together.

"Gentlemen, I don't want to be outdone in politeness, but I'll see you hanged before I speak a word to aid you in your purpose."

The Briton was game to the backbone.

The masked man laughed.

"We won't trouble you, captain, since it goes so hard. One of our boys kept his eyes on you when you stowed the packet away," he said. "You had a little too much wine on board, captain."

The leader motioned to one of the men, who took a bunch of keys from the pocket of the sailor's pantaloons, pulled out a little chest from under the berth, unlocked it and drew forth the white packet. The seaman groaned in rage.

... as they now come, the masked men left the cabin.

The captain jumped into his pantaloons and rushed up to the deck, revolver in hand, mad with rage. There he found the mate and one of the sailors, securely bound; the other sailor had disappeared; evidently he had been in league with the robbers.

Afar off in the mist that rested on the surface of the water, the sailor could discern the dim outline of the boat of the thieves, rapidly vanishing in the gloom.

Drummond blazed away with his revolver after the boat, trusting to the sound of the shots to attract one of the Harbor Police-boats, and as it happened, one was passing close at hand just at that minute.

Pulling alongside, the police inquired the meaning of the disturbance. In a few words the captain explained what had occurred, and directed them as to the course taken by the robbers.

Bending to their oars, the police sent their boat spurting through the surface of the tide.

The masked men, dreaming not of pursuit, were pulling leisurely along, keeping a bright look-out ahead, paying but little attention to the water in their wake.

They had taken the masks from their faces, and pulling along in their working, Whitehall boat, seemed like a party of honest mechanics out for a row.

Before they had the slightest suspicion of danger, the police-boat was in sight.

The measured dip of the oar-blades fell upon the ears of the thieves.

"It's the police, and they're after us!" cried their leader, "Gentleman George"; "pull, boys, or it's Sing Sing and hard labor!"

Then came the chase under the stars. The police-boat gained slowly upon the Rats.

Coolly and carefully the leader of the thieves took aim with his revolver and fired. The bow oar of the police-boat sunk down with a stifled groan, and as the rest ceased their labor to spring to his assistance, the bow of the boat swung round with the tide, and the headway was lost.

With cries of rage the police discharged a few scattering shots at the Rats.

Twenty strokes and the thieves were hid in the mist, safe from pursuit; and then with a low groan, Gentleman George let go the tiller, and sunk fainting to the bottom of the boat.

had been hit by a revolver-ball.

CHAPTER III.

"THE WOMAN."

CHERRY street, near Market, by night; not a very pleasant locality, nor a safe one for a well-dressed stranger.

The hour of ten had just struck.

Underneath the light at the corner, leaning against the lamp-post, stood a burly, thick-set man, dressed plainly in dark clothes. He held a little cane in his hand, and was switching the leg of his pantaloons with it in a manner that betrayed decided traces of impatience, and from the way in which he looked up and down the street, every now and then, it was very evident that he was waiting for some one.

The burly man with the bushy brown beard, and the keen, gray eyes, was the senior partner of the firm of Beck and Bockton, private detectives.

Thomas Beck was pretty well known in New York city, and bore the reputation of being one of the shrewdest men in the business.

"Why on earth don't he come?" the detective muttered, impatiently. "I'm getting about tired of this; I'm not going to hold this lamp-post up much longer."

Then from the gloom of the night, up the street, from the direction of Pike street, came a dark figure.

The detective cast a piercing glance at the new-comer, and an exclamation of satisfaction came from his lips.

"That's my man!" he cried.

The stranger was a man of thirty-five or forty, dressed quite roughly, and yet there was a certain something in his face and figure which betrayed the gentleman despite the coarse garb he wore. He was about the medium height, slenderly built, and yet, to a close observer, the sinewy supple figure, with its easy carriage, would have given the impression of uncommon strength.

The face of the man was a bright olive in hue, smoothly shaven; a square-set face, with its broad, high forehead, prominent nose, massive jaw, and round, glittering black eyes; a face not unlike that of the first Napoleon.

It was now ten days or more since the "slums" of the East side had first seen the dark face of the stranger. Dance-saloon and lodging-house alike had been visited by him. Not a haunt of misery and crime, from Peck Slip to Grand street, that he had not penetrated.

At first his presence had caused much alarm among the "dangerous classes" along-shore; a stranger to them all, in the beginning he was looked upon as an officer in disguise. The birds of prey feared that some one of their number was "wanted," and they kept a wary watch upon the quiet, silent visitor.

Some, bolder than the rest, entered into conversation with, and questioned the suspected man. And he, while apparently answering freely, revealed nothing. He merely said that he was a doctor, and to use the English phrase, was "down on his luck."

It was shrewdly conjectured that the man had got into trouble, in some way, and was keeping "shady" until the affair should blow over.

And so, in the very short space of ten days, the Doctor, as the stranger was popularly termed, was pretty well known to the denizens of Cherry and Water streets.

"What luck?" asked the Doctor, abruptly, as he came up to the detective.

"Nary luck," replied the worthy Mr. Beck, laconically.

"The scent was a false one then?"

"Yes; the woman was an old hag of fifty. Didn't answer the description at all."

"Can you suggest any thing more?" the Doctor questioned, thoughtfully.

"Not at present," the detective answered. "The information that you received was evidently incorrect. There's no such woman and child as you described in any of the saloons round about here."

"It would seem so."

"Shall I still keep a look-out?" the detective asked. "I might stumble upon her accidentally, you know."

"Yes; I will call in and see you some time this week. Good-night." Then the Doctor turned abruptly and retraced his steps down the street.

"Well, he is a peculiar fellow," the detective remarked, communing with himself, as he stood for a moment in the glare of the light, watching the retreating figure of the dark-faced stranger.

And after making this observation the officer walked off up the street. When he came to the Bowery, he hesitated for a moment as if uncertain as to his course.

"Let me see," he queried; "it's almost too late to attend to any thing to-night; but I don't feel like going to bed. I might as well go up as far as the Fifth Avenue Hotel; there's just a chance that I might run across some night-bird there."

So the detective got on board a car, proceeded up town, and about eleven o'clock arrived in front of the hotel. He had come through Twenty-third street; and just as he stepped upon the curbstone, he came face to face with a portly, well-dressed gentleman.

"Good-evening, Mr. Bruyn," Beck said.

"Ah, Mr. Beck, you're the very man I wanted to see!" exclaimed the man accosted.

Nicholas Bruyn, the lawyer millionaire, was a man of fifty-tall, portly and well preserved. Not a gray hair in his carefully-curled yellow locks, nor in his well-waxed, tawny mustache and imperial.

A lawyer by profession, and the sole descendant of one of the old patroon families, all the good things of this world had been strewn before him in rich profusion.

An able, active man, gifted with uncommon talents, and backed by a million of money, at an early age he had gone into politics, and few men in New York State had been more successful.

The Judge's ermine had been worn with skill and grace, and the name of Nicholas Bruyn had been more than once mentioned as that of a possible candidate for Governor of the Empire State.

Beck was immediately all attention at the words of the ex-Judge.

"Any thing I can do for you, Mr. Bruyn?" he asked, respectfully.

"Yes, I think that there is," Bruyn replied. "You are still in the detective line, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"If you will have the kindness to walk down the street with me a little way, where we will not attract any attention, I will explain."

The two proceeded down Twenty-third street until they came to a quiet spot beyond the hotel. There the lawyer halted.

"You undertake the prosecution of inquiries about certain parties for a consideration, I believe," Bruyn said.

"Yes, sir."

"And the matter remains a profound secret between yourself and the party who desires the information?"

"Oh, of course, sir," the secret-service agent replied; "our business would go to the dogs if we didn't keep our mouths shut."

"I supposed that. I wish information about a certain party. You will find all the particulars noted down in this envelope. Spare no expense, and call upon me in my office in Wall street if you find any clue."

The lawyer put the envelope into the hands of the detective, bid him "good-night," and departed.

Beck opened the yellow covering, sauntered up to the nearest light and examined the paper inclosed in the cover.

Name—Celine Seaton.

Age—about forty-two.

Hair—brown.

Eyes—dark-brown.

Face—oval.

Complexion—light.

Figure—slender; about four feet ten in height. Small hands and feet.

Marks—a small mole on left cheek; two small moles on right arm just above the wrist, an inch or more apart.

Occupation—confidence-woman—probably.

Residence—not known.

When the detective finished reading this description, a low whistle of astonishment came from his lips. The description was not new to him.

Ten days before, the man who had simply said that he was to be called "Doctor," had requested the detective to search amid the vile dens of the East-side for a woman named Lina Aton, and had given a description that tallied exactly with that of Celine Seaton. It might only be a coincidence, but that two women should be marked by these moles in exactly the same place, was exceedingly strange.

"I'll go for her ag'in," said Mr. Beck, tersely.

CHAPTER IV.

MOLLY BAWN.

THE dark-faced stranger proceeded on for awhile, and then slackened his pace and finally came to a dead halt as if uncertain which way to go.

"I suppose that I may as well give up the chase," he said, musingly; "yet I am sure that she is lurking somewhere in this neighborhood. Strange that after so many years she should suddenly appear. I could hardly believe my eyes when I met her on the Bowery, ten days ago, but I recognized her at once, for time has dealt lightly with her and she does not look five years older than in the days gone by. I traced her to the corner of Market and Cherry; and there lost her. I think she discovered that she was being followed, and took measures to avoid pursuit. I wonder if she recognized me, in turn. The world has evidently dealt hardly with her, for she was dressed very poorly. It makes me doubt whether there is such a thing as justice in this world when I see that this woman still lives." Bitter indeed was the tone in which the man spoke.

"And yet, who can tell whether the burden of life is not the heaviest curse that could be inflicted upon her?" he murmured after a moment's pause. "Wise judges are we poor humans of each other. I do not care for the woman—do not care whether she is living or dead—but the child. I can not forget the child, and I must know its fate. Since the detective has failed, I'll keep up the chase alone. Sooner or later I will find her, and then discover what I wish to know. The face of the child is ever before me."

The Doctor was standing in front of a squalid tenement house, and his meditations were suddenly and rudely arrested by the sound of angry words coming from the house.

"Go to the devil an' shake yerself, ye fox-headed Greek, ye!" yelled a man's voice, hoarse with rage and liquor combined.

"Whoop! I've me alone till I break her back, the baste!" cried a woman, evidently as much under the influence of liquor as the man who had spoken.

The Doctor, perceiving that a "ruction" was at hand, drew back a few steps and sought shelter in the shadow of a neighboring doorway.

Hardly had he taken up his position when the door of the tenement house opened suddenly and a half-grown girl, bare-headed and bare-footed, fled into the street and ran for dear life.

From the entry-way came the cries of her assailants, but they did not attempt pursuit.

After a look into the street, the man and woman who had driven the girl out, gave vent to a torrent of curses and threats, and then, closing the door, retired to their apartments again.

The Doctor, who had recognized the fugitive as she passed him, came from the shelter of the doorway and proceeded up the street after her.

At the corner, ready to flee at the slightest sign of pursuit, the Doctor found the girl.

She did not attempt to run at his approach, for her sharp eyes, accustomed to the darkness, cat-like, had discovered that he was no enemy.

"Are they comin' arter me?" she asked, eagerly, as the Doctor came up.

"No," he replied; "they have closed the door and gone back to their room."

Then, by aid of the light of the street-lamp, shining down full upon the face and figure of the girl, he took a good look at her.

She was a wee little thing, clad in tattered garments, with a round, rosy face, though it was now sadly discolored with dirt. Her eyes were large, and a beautiful dark-blue in color. Her hair, bright-red in hue, curled in little tangled masses all over her head.

She looked as plump and healthy as a well-fed kitten, and seemed too to be as active and as lively.

"They know that it ain't no use for them to try to ketch me!" the little sprite observed, confidently. "There ain't a boy in the street kin beat me runnin'; 'sides, they're both of 'em too drunk to ketch a sick monkey to-night."

"What is the trouble?" the Doctor asked.

"They wanted to beat me, an' I ain't a-goin' to stand that any longer. I'm too big to be beat now!" the maid replied, indignantly.

"Why did they wish to beat you?"

"Because I told 'em I wasn't goin' out to beg for 'em any more. I've got sick of that kind of business, an' I'm goin' to quit," she said, decidedly. "They ain't my folks, anyway. They've always called me a beggar's brat, an' told how much it cost to keep me, an' now I'm jest a-goin' to paddle my own canoe. I don't go back to that barracks any more, an' if that old beast of a Greek dares to give me any of his chin-music, I'll jest throw a brick at him."

The girl's eyes flashed and she stamped her foot impatiently as she uttered the threat.

"What are you going to do for a living?" inquired the Doctor, kindly.

"I don't 'xactly know," the young "Arab" replied, a thoughtful expression upon her features. "I think that I had better go to selling papers or something like that. I want a 'stake' to start with, though, 'cos I haven't got nary stamp now. That old Mulcarty hen allers goes through my clothes an' gobbls my stamps. I've jest got a good mind to lay for her some night, an' hit her with a brick, too. I'll do it sure when I get good an' ready."

"Oh, no; you mustn't do that," the Doctor said, very seriously; "that wouldn't be lady-like."

The girl looked at the speaker for a moment, opening her eyes wide in astonishment.

"Well, I ain't a lady," she at length retorted. "I'm only a little gutter-snipe."

"But you can make a lady of yourself if you will only try," asserted the Doctor.

"Mebbe I kin," slowly and thoughtfully. "There's Mickey Shea, he said that he'd make a lady out of me, some day, but he's a thief, he is; an' that's the way he wants to make a lady out of me. I know; I ain't a-goin' to steal for nobody an' be sent up on the Island."

"That's right; you just stick to that," and the Doctor patted the girl's head. "By the way, what is your name?"

"Molly," was the prompt reply.

"Molly what?"

"Molly nothin', I guess," dubiously. "I never was called nothin' but Molly, 'cept Mickey Shea, an' he calls me Molly Bawn; that's Irish for fair Molly, so he says."

"Molly Bawn," the Doctor repeated. "Well, now, that is a very pretty name and very appropriate. But, Molly, I should think you could find something better to do than to sell papers. You look like a smart girl."

"I ain't a fool, you bet!" was the characteristic answer.

"Couldn't you get a place with some family?"

"I guess not," doubtfully. "I hav'n't got any one to speak for me, an' I don't look jest the cheese to go an' apply for a situation."

"How old are you, Molly?"

"Sixteen."

"As old as that?" the Doctor exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes; I know I don't look that old, but I am."

"Are your parents dead?"

"I guess so; I never heerd any thing about them."

"Sixteen," the Doctor muttered, to himself; "that is the exact age of the child! Why not take this waif that heaven has thrown in my way and give up the search for the other? The mystic tie of blood half the time lies in imagination, not in reality."

The girl had watched the face of the Doctor attentively; her quick wits had divined that, in some way, she was connected with the meditation of her new-made friend.

"Molly, suppose I should find a place for you?" he questioned.

"That would be jolly!" she cried, emphatically.

"You would go with me?"

"Just you try me!"

The impulsive answer fully satisfied the Doctor.

"One good turn deserves another, you know," he said, lightly; "you saved me from the fellows who were in wait for me, the other night, and now I can square the account."

And then, just as the words passed his lips, the Doctor felt a soft hand on his shoulder, and a woman's voice sounded in his ears.

CHAPTER V.

"LAID OUT."

ON Pike street, not far from the corner of Cherry, was a five-story tenement-house; a huge, barrack-like building, swarming over with human life.

In a small room fronting on the street, in the upper story of the tenement-house, on a small double-bed, lay George Dominick, better known to the world, perhaps, as "Gentleman George."

He was a handsome fellow, who had not yet seen his twenty-fifth year. In figure he was tall and slender, his face round and florid; a broad forehead and a massive chin; his eyes blue, clear and full; the short-cut hair and the closely-trimmed mustache were of a tawny, yellow hue.

Gentleman George was quite a curiosity. By profession a bond and bank-robber, a forger and confidence-man, yet he had never "put in an appearance" before the bar of Justice, and his handsome face did not appear in the collection of photographs at the Police Head-quarters in Mulberry street, popularly known as the Rogue's Gallery.

And few detectives, too, in New York, either public or private, who could pick out Gentleman George from amid the Broadway throng, when he chose to promenade on a pleasant afternoon.

Bold and skillful operator as he was, he had never been taken; but now, struck down by a random shot, he lay helpless—for the time, "laid out," to use the slang of the thieves' argot.

By the side of the bed sat a woman, watching the sick man with a countenance full of anxiety; a slender-faced, black-eyed woman of four and twenty; not pretty, and yet with a quiet, ladylike look—one who, evidently, had seen a great deal of trouble.

And this woman, plainly clad, with the anxious, careworn face, was the wife of the human wolf who preyed upon his fellow-men.

With a restless, uneasy motion, the sick man turned upon the bed, opened his eyes and uttered a groan of pain.

"How do you feel now?" the watcher asked, anxiously.

"Badly!" he exclaimed, in a petulant way. "I feel as if

the cursed ball was red-hot. I had no idea that I was so seriously hurt."

"You should have listened to my advice, and had a doctor to attend to the wound at once," the wife said, in her quiet, subdued way.

"And run the chance of the doctor betraying me to the officers," George exclaimed, sharply. "You know well enough what a precious row the newspapers are kicking up about the affair."

"Were you not hasty in using your revolver?" the woman asked. "The afternoon paper says that there is very little prospect of the officer's recovery."

"If I hadn't put a ball into him, we should all have been taken by the police. It was the narrowest squeeze that I ever had," the man replied, impatiently.

"And I warned you not to go."

The quiet tone of the woman, as well as the nature of the speech, excited the anger of the man.

"I believe you are really glad in your heart that I got this slug into me, just because I didn't take your advice and keep out of the affair!" he cried, hotly.

A moment the woman looked at him with her cold, calm eyes; he moved impatiently, restless under the glance.

"George, you do not believe what you are saying," she replied, not a trace of passion in her voice. "You know well enough that, had it been possible, I would have gladly received the ball that struck you. You know that, to save you from pain, I would pour out all the blood that is in my veins, drop by drop."

The man turned away his head for a few moments; he could not bear the steady glance of the reproachful black eyes.

"I wonder that you do not hate me!" he exclaimed, abruptly, after a long pause.

"Why should I hate you?" the wife asked, quietly and calmly, and yet there was just a little tinge of bitterness perceptible in her voice.

"Because I deceived you," he said, still avoiding the steady gaze of the lustrous dark eyes.

"Deceived me?" the woman said, in a tone of question.

"Yes, you know well enough," Gentleman George replied, in a sort of an aggrieved way. "When you married me, you thought that you were getting a gentleman with plenty of money for a husband; you had no idea that you were marrying an adventurer, who depended upon his wits and the world's weaknesses for his living."

"It was a very bitter waking from a very bright dream," was her answer, in the same calm, inflexible tone. "That was three years ago."

"Yes; you were doing pretty well when I met you, too; getting good wages, though you did give about all of it to that drunken brute of a father of yours."

"Not a brute, George," she protested; "a vain, idle, foolish man, whose only happiness is in liquor, but not a brute; too weak for that."

"Don't you sometimes wish that you had never seen me?" he demanded, abruptly. "Don't you sometimes wish that you were still Hero Walebone, instead of being Mrs. Dominic, eh?"

"Why do you ask such a question?"

"Oh, a fancy; that's all," with assumed carelessness.

"I have never regretted marrying you, George," was the calm reply; "and I hope that you will never give me cause to regret it."

Something in this speech sounded like an accusation. George moved restlessly on the bed for a moment, and then turned suddenly and faced the woman, whose steady eyes never quailed.

"I don't exactly like the way in which you say that, Hero!" he exclaimed, an ugly look on his face. "There's something the matter with you. Do you mean to make any accusation against me?" There was a latent menace in his tone.

"Does your own heart tell you that I ought to?"

"That ain't answering my question," he retorted, quite roughly, but again evading the unwavering glance of those dark, searching eyes.

"George Dominick, have I not faithfully followed your fortunes, ever since the day when the minister made us man and wife?" she asked.

"I don't see any need of putting any such question as that," protested the sick man, in a tone of irritation.

"You know that I have," she continued, firmly; "you know that I have been to you a true and faithful wife; that I have never uttered a word of complaint; that I have borne bad fortune as calmly as good; that I have aided you in all your schemes, and more than once have saved you from impending danger; and now I say to you, George Dominick, don't cast me aside for any other woman; for, so sure as you do it, it will prove to you to be, without exception, the most foolish act in all your life."

"See here; I don't want you to threaten me because I'm flat on my back, sick," George cried, angrily; "and what put any such notion into your head?"

"I saw you the other night when you met that little brown-haired woman in Cherry street, near Market."

George started at the words.

"I was waiting for father to come out of the saloon near there, to send a message to Pen'. I saw the woman come down Market street, turn the corner and dart into a doorway. The action attracted my attention, and I watched to see why she

did it; then I saw a man in dark clothes, who evidently had been following her, come down the street. The woman still remained in her hiding-place, and I watched her until you came; then I instantly understood that she had come there to meet you."

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed George, with a forced laugh; "that was only Jenny Shea, Mickey's sister, bringing me a message from Mickey."

The woman looked at George for a moment, a peculiar light shining in her dark eyes.

"Take care that that woman don't bring you into trouble," she said, meaningly.

"Oh, I'll risk that."

"And now, I'm going for a doctor," and she rose as she spoke. "I'll get one who can keep his tongue quiet. I'll not be gone long."

And Gentleman George was left to his own not over-pleasant reflections.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNKNOWN.

"CAN I speak a few words with you, please?" said the soft, womanly voice.

The Doctor turned and beheld a white-faced, dark-eyed female, clad in dark clothes.

"Certainly," he replied, somewhat astonished at the question, for the glance had told him that the woman was a stranger.

"I wish to speak to you in private, please," the sad-faced caller said, with a look at Molly Bawn, which that young lady returned with interest. Molly did not like the idea of the stranger accosting her new-found protector.

"Stay here till I come back, Molly," he said.

"You bet," replied the girl, laconically; the slang of the streets was her mother tongue.

"Now I am at your service," said the Doctor, addressing the woman.

She nodded, walked up the street a few paces, out of earshot of the girl, and then turned and faced the Doctor who had followed her.

"You are a doctor, I believe?"

"Yes," he replied, not at all astonished at the question, for, on the first night of his sojourn within the classic precincts of the east side, he had volunteered to dress a wound that a drunken sailor had received in a dance-house brawl, and had been termed "Doctor" from that hour.

The woman took a long and steady look at his face. Although surprised by her behavior, the Doctor waited patiently for her to explain the meaning of the strange conduct.

"Do you know it seems strange to me that a man in appearance like yourself should be obliged to live in such a locality as this?"

The Doctor understood at once that this remark was to be taken in the light of a "leading question," as a legal gentleman would observe.

"There are reasons for all things in this world, they say," he remarked, carelessly.

The woman again favored him with a piercing glance from her dark eyes. The Doctor bore the scrutiny with perfect composure.

"You look like a man who would not betray a confidence reposed in him," she said, slowly.

"You can trust me as far as you can see me," he answered, carelessly.

"Suppose that a man who has had the misfortune to get into a little trouble should send for you in a professional way, would you go?"

"Most assuredly."

The face of his inquisitor brightened up a little at the prompt and unqualified answer.

"You wouldn't say any thing to get the man into trouble who trusted to your honor?" A shade of anxiety was apparent in the face of the woman as she put the question.

"Doctors are like lawyers and do not generally tell tales out of school," the man said, quite seriously.

"You are willing to go with me, then?"

"Yes, if my professional services are needed."

"They are—urgently, perhaps!" the woman exclaimed, quickly.

"Shall I have to go far?"

"No, only a block or so."

"What is the matter with the man?"

"A bullet in the shoulder."

"It's lucky, then, that I happen to have a little case of instruments in my pocket. Do you wish me to go at once?"

"Yes."

"Wait until I speak a few words with the girl, and then I am at your service."

"Be as quick as possible," the woman said, earnestly. "The person who needs your aid has been without medical advice too long already."

"I will only detain you a few moments," and then he returned to the girl, who, with distrustful eyes, had watched the interview between the two.

"I know her!" exclaimed the girl, as the Doctor came up to her.

"You do?" he said, rather surprised at the information.

"Yes; her name used to be Hero Walebone."

"Used to be?"

"Yes, afore she was married. She used to live on Market street. I know all on 'em. There's the old man—he's a regular old bummer, he is—hangs up by the nose round the whisky shops; says he's a workin' man; never does no work that ever I see'd, except drink bad rum—an' then there's two sisters; they work in a hoop-skirt place in Division street. I knows both on 'em."

"And who did this girl marry?" the Doctor asked, carelessly.

"I guess I don't know," answered the girl, sagely. "I've heered the old bummer—that's her father, Chris Walebone, a reg'lar old rounder—say as how he was a gentleman an' lived on the interest of his money. I see'd him once, a long time ago; he was a regular swell, but he was a-goin' with Mickey Shea, an' he's a thief, he is."

The Doctor instantly conjectured that the person who had got into trouble was probably the "swell" husband of the pale-faced woman.

"I'm going with this woman to see a sick person," the Doctor explained. "Will you wait at the corner of the street until I return? I shan't be very long."

"Take care that it ain't a 'plant!'" exclaimed the girl, suddenly and suspiciously.

"A 'plant!'" said the Doctor, in astonishment.

"Yes; don't you know?" asked the "Arab," evidently surprised that she was not understood.

"Well, no; I don't think I do exactly understand what you mean."

"Say, ain't you bin in a little trouble?" demanded the girl, shrewdly.

"A little trouble?"

"Yes, with the cops—the perlice."

"What if I have?" The Doctor was at a loss to guess what she was driving at.

"Why, then, they puts up a job on you," was the mysterious explanation; "they git this woman to come arter you for to go an' see somebody that's sick, an' when you git there you'll find that it's the peelers."

"I guess the police will not take all that trouble on my account," he said, smiling.

The girl shook her head dubiously.

"I know 'em!" she cried, emphatically; "they're up to all sorts of tricks. But, then, if it ain't the perlice, mebbe it's a 'plant' of another kind. P'haps somebody thinks that you're worth goin' through, so they gits this woman for to decoy you into some house, and then they'll lay you out."

The Doctor laughed.

"I don't think that there is much danger of anybody trying a game of that kind on me; why, if they stripped me they couldn't get five dollars for all that I have on."

"They'd do it for that, quick enough, some on 'em!" exclaimed the girl. "Why, I've see'd 'em half-kill a drunken sailor for a couple of dollars. Hadn't you better let me go with you?" Molly put the question very earnestly. "I bet I know all the rounders that roost round here. I know I ain't big enough to fight much, but I kin throw a brick as good as any of 'em, an' kin yell loud enough for a dozen. You'd better let me go."

The man could not help smiling at the earnestness of the girl.

"I don't think there is any danger; besides, this woman wouldn't like to have you go."

"Tell her you won't go without me," suggested the would-be protector; "that would fix her."

"No, I have promised to go; so be content and wait at the corner until I come back; will you?"

"Yes, if you say so," she answered, quite reluctantly, "but if they do put up a job on you, I'll jest get square with them or my name ain't Molly Bawn."

The Doctor laughed, told the girl not to get tired waiting, and returned to where his caller stood.

Molly remained quiet for a few moments and watched the pair as they walked rapidly away; then a sudden idea came into her head.

"I'll jest keep my eyes on 'em, anyway!" she exclaimed.

Acting on the impulse, she followed, cautiously.

CHAPTER VII.

▲ BRIGHT, PARTICULAR STAR.

A NEW star had flashed suddenly across the theatrical firmament of the metropolis of the New World.

A Miss Ellen Desmond, a young and beautiful girl, perfect in figure as in face and really possessing, too, considerable talent for the stage.

The lady came, saw and conquered.

Not an easy matter this, even for youth, beauty and talent. But the lady was fortunate. She had been splendidly "handled;" we are using the technical term, as we would speak of a horse being well driven by his jockey. The business manager of the new star was a gentleman who had followed the stage ever since the tender years of boyhood; a speculator whom no loss could daunt, no failure could discourage; who understood exactly how much the public at

large know of that art which the world calls "acting;" and who fully comprehended what the people who paid their money to enter theaters wished to see, and how to excite their curiosity in regard to the attraction which he had to offer.

This energetic gentleman had brought Miss Ellen Desmond to New York; had procured an opening for her at one of the principal theaters; had blazoned the name of Ellen Desmond on every dead-wall in the city, and by shrewd and novel newspaper advertisements had so excited the curiosity of the theater-going public that they crowded the theater on the night of her *debut*. The lady appeared in a new play, written expressly to exhibit what talents she did possess, and to hide what defects severe and diligent drilling would not efface; she was ably supported; and as the play was strong in itself, and the lady was pretty, pleasing and fairly talented, she really made what is known in theatrical parlance as a "hit."

The theater was crowded nightly—not all paying patrons, to confess the truth, for the sagacious business manager believed in "full houses," and distributed free tickets where they would "do most good," in an extremely liberal manner, and it really happened on two or three evenings during the first week of the lady's engagement, that patrons with money in their hands, eager for tickets, were turned away from the doors of the theater, with the announcement of "Standing room only," while there were four or five hundred "dead-heads" occupying good seats in the auditorium.

This was very shrewd policy.

The attraction that was crowding the theater nightly, and turning money away besides, must be worth seeing. So reasoned the public; while the self-confident business manager of Miss Ellen Desmond compared the great public to a flock of geese:—where one goose goes, the rest all want to go, likewise.

The actress did not go to a hotel upon her arrival in the great metropolis, but had been hidden away by her sagacious manager in apartments on Broadway near Twenty-ninth street. He reasoned that, when we make an article common, it depreciates in value. The actress who could be *seen* during the day at her hotel, the people would not care to come to see at night, and pay, besides, for the privilege of so doing.

The actress was guarded from intrusion by a huge negress, who bluntly repulsed all intruders.

Her meals, sent in from a neighboring restaurant, were received by the negress, and so Miss Ellen Desmond was kept entirely secluded from the view of the curious public. She even had a carriage to convey her to and from the theater, and thus escape scrutiny.

The apartments of the lady consisted of three rooms, plainly but neatly furnished.

In the front room, the windows of which looked out on Broadway, the actress was seated. The hour of ten had just chimed from the little clock on the mantle-piece. The breakfast-service was on the table, and Miss Ellen Desmond, the "bright, particular star," in a handsome morning wrapper, seated by the table, was looking over the morning papers.

And as one looked upon the delicate beauty, utterly unadorned by the witching hand of art, in her breakfast "undress," with her hair drawn back carelessly from her temples and wound into a knot behind, it was not strange that, on the stage at night, behind the mystic "foot-lights," with the glare of the gas upon her and the intoxication of acting swelling in every vein, and beating in every pulse, she seemed of more than mortal beauty, to possess more than earthly gifts, and had charmed, as with a magic spell wrung from fairy lore, half of male New York.

Little wonder that the women pronounced her "sweet," and the men came, night after night, to revel in the beauty of her wonderful face.

And as she sits in the easy-chair, toying with the spoon of her chocolate, we will describe her.

A little round face, not larger hardly than the face of a child; the skin white as alabaster, and with just the faintest tinge of color in the cheeks; the nose, straight as the line of the Grecian Hebe; the mouth, red-lipped as the coral from the depths of the green ocean, and in shape like the curved bow of the ancient Eastern warrior; her chin, dimpled as by the cunning art of a craftsman's master hand; her hair, wavy in curling tresses, yellow as strands of beaten gold, and—strange contrast—her eyes were dark-brown, and her eyebrows and eyelashes were black. Perhaps this it was that gave the charming expression to the face.

Idly the newspaper dropped from her hand to the floor, and a dreamy look of meditation came over the fair face.

She was aroused from her abstraction by the negress knocking and then entering the apartment. She announced that the business manager, Mr. Almer Medham, Esq., as he was generally announced on the "small-bills," was coming up stairs and hardly had the servant withdrawn into the inner apartment when Mr. Medham entered the room.

The business manager was a fat, jolly fellow, of thirty-five or thereabouts, always overflowing with good-humor.

In his hand he carried a bouquet, designed in exquisite taste, and composed of the rarest and most costly flowers.

"Well, how is the little woman this morning?" he asked, as he seated himself unceremoniously by the table and tossed the bouquet into her lap.

"Oh, very well," she replied, languidly. "What a beautiful bouquet this is."

"Yes, that's a feather in your cap, my dear," he said, with an expression of triumph upon his face.

"Indeed! How so?" she asked with an air of indifference. She partly anticipated the answer.

"That is a present from one of the leading gentlemen of New York."

The lip of the actress curled just a little. She did not seem to be at all affected by the statement.

"He took the trouble to call upon me at my hotel this morning. I was introduced to him last night after the 'show' was out." The business manager would use the slang of the "showman."

"Yes?" Miss Desmond did not seem at all interested.

"He came in this morning and wished to know if you would accept a few flowers. Of course I replied that if there was any thing in this world you really did admire it was flowers. So he requested me to walk down to the flower-store, and there he had that bouquet made up, and then he requested me to hand it to you."

"Of course he wants an introduction," the actress said, quite contemptuously.

"Well, he didn't say any thing about that, but I suppose he does of course," Medham replied.

"Strange that he didn't imagine that he could come right up with you at once; that is generally the idea they have. Juno had to put one young fool out by main force yesterday. He insisted upon coming up. He pretended that he was connected with one of the newspapers, and had come for the purpose of interviewing me."

Medham laughed.

"Oh, this is a gentleman, one of the old New York stock, a lawyer and a millionaire—Mr. Nicholas Bruyn."

The actress sprung to her feet with a bound.

"Nicholas Bruyn wish to see me!" she cried, her face as white as the napkin in her hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FISHMAN.

IN Market street, just a block above the house wherein the wounded man lay, was another tenement-house, almost a counterpart of the first, except that the lower floor was occupied by a grocery store.

And just about the same time of the interview between the Doctor and the pale, sad-faced woman, in Cherry street, a young man and woman, seated by the door of the tenement house on the coal-box belonging to the grocery store, were holding a busy conversation.

From the manner in which the couple sat on the box, so near together and so comfortable, it was evident that they were lovers.

The girl was a younger sister of the sad-faced wife of Gentleman George, by name, Artemisia—which appellation was generally shortened into Arty. She was the second daughter of the individual known as Christopher Walebone, so graphically described by the girl, Molly Bawn, as "as old bummer."

Arty was strikingly like her sister, Hero, in the face, but lacked her sad air; she was small in stature and as lively as a cricket in disposition.

The young man was a stoutly-built young fellow, with an honest, good-natured looking face; his head was round as a bullet, and his dark-brown hair was cropped tight to his head.

Billy West—so this sturdy young fellow was called—was a regular New York boy, born and bred. Left an orphan at an early age, he had had a pretty hard time of it. Thrown by chance in with the fishmen of Fulton Market, when only a youngster, he had learned their business. And as he grew up a stoutly-built, muscular lad, quick on his legs and handy with his fists, his associates, fond of manly sports, were often in the habit of pitting him against some other promising youngster in a game of fisticuffs, and by the time Billy West got to be eighteen, he had the reputation of being an ugly customer to tackle; not that the lad was inclined to be at all quarrelsome, but he didn't let anybody walk over him without a "turn-up," to use the language of the "boys."

That Billy West would have inevitably become a professional prize-fighter, was almost a foregone conclusion, had he not met with Arty Walebone. That free-spoken young lady, when the gentle fishman had bashfully suggested that she would like to keep company with her, instantly replied that she didn't want any "nasty fighting-man hanging round her. She didn't believe in men making beasts of themselves, and would have nothing to do with any fellow who turned himself into a bull-dog."

Billy West went home to his six-by-nine garret, "put himself in his little bed," and pondered over the pointed remarks of the lively and independent daughter of the house of Walebone.

And when in the first gray light of the early morning he opened his eyes and stared around him, his mind was made up.

He gave his professional friends in the fisticuff line the cold shoulder; no more did he don the "gloves" for the benefit of "Cast-Iron Jack," or "Jimmy, the Mouse," and in the best of humors proceed to "put a head" on some other ambitious craftsman of the "slogging art." No more did the Fulton Market Pet—as Billy was fondly termed—"stop, job, and get away," in first-class style with some other exponent of the "manly art of self-defense," to the admiration of the "coves wot love a mill."

And from the day when he cast aside the "gloves" forever, and made up his mind to become a decent member of society, and no longer abuse the manly gifts that Heaven had given him, Billy West prospered.

A woman's will worked a wondrous change in the fortunes of the Fulton Market boy. The money which he had formerly been in the habit of squandering in the corner liquor store with the "boys," he diligently saved up, and within a year from the time the young working girl had quietly told him that he would have to choose between her and his pugilistic friends, Billy West astonished his "boss" by announcing to him, one Saturday night, when he received his wages, that he, Billy, should be obliged to leave him, as he was going to buy a horse and wagon, and go into business on his own account.

And so Billy joined the great army bearing the generic term of licensed venders, and he still prospered, much to the wonder of his old associates, who turned up their noses when they spoke of Billy's desertion of the "manly art."

But little cared Billy for their sneers as long as the girl of his heart smiled kindly on him. Only one thing troubled him; Walebone, the "hard-handed mechanic," as he delighted to call himself, did not appear to regard Billy with a friendly eyes. West had been keeping company with the girl for nearly three years, and although old Walebone never had openly objected to the arrangement, yet whenever he had a little too much liquor on board—which was generally every night in the week regularly—by the hour of ten—he would make sarcastic remarks about the fish-trade, and the dealers in that brain-producing food, and cry aloud that the mechanic was Nature's noblest work; and then in a flood of tears, he would lift up his voice and lament that no child of his had ever married one of the noblemen of Nature or was likely to marry one.

Whenever Billy had happened to be present on these occasions, when the aged Walebone told his sorrows, the blood of the fishman would rise in his veins; he would seize an early opportunity to retire, and in the solitude of the entry would confide to his beloved Arty that, if the "old cuss" wasn't her father, he'd take an intense pleasure in giving him "a belt in the snoot."

Then Arty would put her arms round his neck and beg him to remember that the speaker was her only parent, and that he always felt bad when he reflected upon the condition of the down-trodden working-man.

To which Billy would reply that rum had a good deal more to do with the aged Walebone's remarks than any thing else, and that he'd like to see the "old man" tackle a job of work instead of "jawin'" so much about it "with his mouth."

As a final result Billy would go away quite contented, but, when he got home to the solitude of the six-by-nine attic, the way he would "cuss" the single parent of his beloved was a caution!

The two, sitting together so cosily on the Dutchman's coal-box, were discussing the chances of gaining the "old man's" consent to their union.

The girl seemed very doubtful; her father did not look upon the fishman with favorable eyes. "He keeps saying that I ought to marry a hard-working mechanic," she said.

"Well, I ain't a wood-botcher nor an iron-sp'iler, but, if there is any two-legged man in New York that works any harder fur a livin' than I do, I'd like to see him trotted out, that's all!" Billy exclaimed, indignantly. "And as for your dad a-talkin' all the time about a hard-handed son of toil, I'll bet two dollars an' a half that my hands are as hard as any of 'em. I don't go an' howl round, either, 'bout being abused and trod on, but, if any snoozer tried to walk over me, I jes' tell him quietly that I ain't afraid of any man of my weight, and if he's on his muscle to peel and wade in. Arty, I don't want to say a word ag'in' the old man, but if he'd do less work with his mouth, and more with his hands, it would be a good thing for his family."

"Now, Billy!" exclaimed the girl, in remonstrance, "you ain't say any thing about father, because if he don't work himself it is because he's trying to better the condition of the working men."

"Yes, there's four or five on 'em meet at a rummy on East Broadway, an' a heap of gas they talk 'bout what they're goin' to do for the workin'-men, but nobody ever see'd any of 'em work," Bill replied. "I ain't got no use for sich snoozers." The fishman was thoroughly in earnest in his remarks.

"Oh, Billy, you mustn't. Father says that when the working-men all stand together they will rule the whole country; and that all the money the rich people have really belongs to them, and that they ought to have it," the girl said, repeating what she had so often heard.

"Oh, of course," Billy retorted, sarcastically; "the avenue folks didn't work for it, or nothin'; oh, no! I s'pose I ought fur to share my hoss and wagon with 'em. I think I will, too—*in a horn?*" And then a sudden thought struck Billy. "Arty, where's your sister—the one that married that Dominick? Is she round?—cos I'm feared that he's in trouble. Captain Murphy—he's the police captain of this district—was tryin' to pump me about your sister to-day."

CHAPTER IX.

BILLY'S STORY.

THE girl looked at Billy in astonishment.

"Why, what do you suppose the police want to know about either Hero or her husband?" she asked.

"How should I know?" replied Billy, evasively.

"But what did the policeman say?"

"Oh, not much. I met him about five o'clock this afternoon. I sold out pretty soon to-day, and I was jes' puttin' the horse up when the captain came by, and he jes' asked how things were working, and leaned up ag'in' an awning-post, jes' careless-like. Well, I told him that times were pretty middlin'; then he up an' axed me if I was keepin' company with you."

"And what did you say?"

"I jes' told him that I hung out round here sometimes, an' then he said—jes' careless-like, you know, as if it wasn't any account to him—didn't a sister of yours get married some time ago. Now, you see, Arty, this jes' opened my eyes, 'cos I've seen the captain afore, an' I knew when he commenced to talk 'bout your sister that it meant business. I didn't let him see, you know, that I had 'dropped on him,' so I jes' answered, as innocent as a young porgy a-playin' on the Jersey flats, that you *did* have a sister, an' that she *did* get married, some time ago."

"And what did he say then?" asked the girl, deeply interested.

"Well, he looked up at the sky an' axed me if I thought that it was going to rain, an' it weak-fish had commenced to run yet. I never let on, you know, an' answered jes' as nice as if I didn't know what he was after. Then he said that I had a good horse, an' then axed what was the name of your sister's husband. I told him Dominick, an' he 'peared to think for a moment an' 'lowed that he thought he knew a man by that name, an' wondered if it was the same one. In course I went on unharnessin' the hoss, an' kept as still as a mouse. Then the captain sed that he really believed 'twas the same man, an' axed me if I had ever see'd him. I told him I never did. Then he talked a little while 'bout what the chances were for the next 'lection; how the ward would go, etc., and then come plump to the p'int, an' axed me if your sister an' her husband were living round 'bout here, or if I had seen 'em lately. I told him that I hadn't."

"Did he ask any more questions?"

"Nothin' to speak of; he talked five or ten minutes more, maybe, but sed nothin' particular," Billy replied. "Then he walked off up the street, an' I see'd a little man in dark clothes jine him."

"Did you know the little man, Billy?"

"I bet yer!" he replied, emphatically; "it was one of the detectives from the Central Office. I tell you, Arty, if Hero and her husband are round there's trouble ahead fur 'em."

The girl remained silent for a few moments, evidently in deep thought; then suddenly spoke:

"I'm afraid there is something the matter, for my sister was at the house to-night, just after dark, and she looked real sad and careworn."

"Did she say any thin' 'bout her husband?"

"Nothing particular. I asked her where she lived now, but she said that I mustn't ask questions, and I knew, of course, that she had some reason for not telling."

"What does Dominick do for a living, anyway?" asked Billy, suddenly.

"I don't know exactly," the girl replied. "I believe that he travels, and sells goods by samples, or something of that kind."

"You know Mickey Shea, don't you, Arty?" Billy asked, after pondering over the matter for a few moments.

"Yes," replied the girl, wondering at the question.

"Do you know how he gets his livin'?"

"Well, I have heard people say that he isn't any better than he ought to be."

"He's a regular black sheep, he is, Arty," Billy said, decidedly. "He's a dock-rat—steals any thing he kin get his hands on. He's bin up to the 'Island' half a dozen times. Was sent up to Sing Sing once, for five years, but he's a big man in the ward 'round 'lection time, an' his gang got him pardoned out. Then they had him up once fur stabbing a man down in South street, an' how he ever got out of that I don't know. I reckon, though, it was political influence that fixed the job. Mebbe they pigeon-holed the indictment."

"What's that, Billy?"

"Why, suspended the case an' let him go on straw bail; put the papers in a pigeon-hole; so, you see, if he don't work jes' right 'bout 'lection time they kin take the papers out an' put him through," Billy explained.

"But why did you want to know if I knew him?"

"'Cos I heard him mention George Dominick's name, the other night, in a liquor saloon up the street. The place is kind of a crib where the snoozers hang out. You see, I met my old boss, an' we went in to take a smile. An' while we were b'istin' our p'ison I heered this Mickey Shea, who was talkin' in a corner with another rounder, say somethin' 'bout George Dominick. In course I couldn't make out what they were a-talkin' about. I only heered the name. But I kin tell you one thing, Arty, if your sister's husband is any friend of Mickey Shea's, he ain't the kind of man fur your sister to tie to."

"I'm afraid that Hero ain't very happy," the girl said, slowly; "she don't look well at all; she's real thin, and I never saw her so pale and careworn before."

"Well, I hope that her old man hain't got into any trouble, but I'm afraid that he has," Billy remarked. "I don't believe the captain would take the trouble to pump me about him if there wasn't somethin' up."

"She is living round here, somewhere," Arty said, suddenly, "though she didn't say where she lived. I am pretty sure that it ain't fur off. Do you s'pose that anybody saw her when she came to see us to-day? any of the police, I mean?"

Billy gave a low and prolonged whistle. It was evident that he felt uneasy in his mind.

"Well, Arty, I don't want to discourage you, but I'm a leetle afeard that they are close on her track," he replied. "Seeing the detective with Captain Murphy looks kinder suspicious."

"What do you suppose that they are after Mr. Dominick for?" Arty asked, with a shudder.

"Didn't you read 'bout that fight on the river, the other night, between the Harbor Police and a party of river-thieves, when one of the officers was shot?"

"Yes, I read it."

"Well, do you know it struck me when I read 'bout that fuss that Mickey Shea an' his gang had somethin' to do with it," Billy went on to explain. "You see, Arty, I used to go 'round with the boys a good deal in the old time, an' I knew a heap 'bout these river-rats, as they call themselves. This Mickey tried one night to rope me in to go with 'em, an' I jes' told him what I thought of him an' his crowd in pretty plain words; then he got mad an' picked a muss with me, an' it took me 'bout two minutes to warm him so that his own mammy wouldn't have known him; an' he had his crowd with him, too, but there was five or six of the Fulton Market fellows round, an' they jes' see'd that I had a fair show. Mickey threatened to lay me out, but he knows that I can flax him an' any two of his gang all put together if I only have half a chance."

"Do you suppose that my sister's husband had any thing to do with shooting that officer?" asked the girl, anxiously.

"In course I don't know any thin' 'bout it," Billy replied, with a shake of the head. "But, when the captain tried to pump me to-day about Dominick, an' I remember hearin' Mickey speak 'bout him, it jes' struck me that mebbe he had somethin' to do with that affair."

"If the police were on the watch, perhaps they followed Hero from the house to-day?"

"That's what I'm afeard of," Billy observed, thoughtfully. Then up the street with uncertain steps came a fat, elderly man, gray-haired and heavily jowled.

It was the venerable Christopher Walebone.

He beheld the couple seated upon the coal-box and straightened himself up in righteous indignation.

CHAPTER X.

TIMELY AID.

THE woman proceeded onward with rapid steps and the Doctor followed close behind.

She entered the door of a large tenement house, situated on Market street, turned her head as if for the purpose of seeing that the man whom she was conducting was at hand, and then, satisfied that he was following closely behind, proceeded up stairs.

The Doctor followed silently; the rustle of the woman's dress was his guide through the dark passages.

At a door on the upper landing his conductor halted.

"This is the place," she said, opening the door and entering the room.

The Doctor followed, and at a single glance noted the scanty furniture of the apartment, and the sick man extended upon the bed.

"I will be back soon," and turning round, the Doctor observed that the woman had left the apartment, closing the door behind her. He understood at once that it was her purpose to leave him alone with the sick man, and advanced to the bedside.

Gentleman George nodded his head in salutation. "You are a doctor?"

"Yes."

"I've got a bullet in my shoulder. I thought that it was only a scratch, or that the bullet had passed clean through, but from the way it pains me I have come to the conclusion that the lead is still in the shoulder."

Silently the Doctor examined the wound; then he took out a little case of instruments from his pocket, opened it and selected a "probe."

A cry of pain came from the lips of the wounded man, despite his Indian-like hardihood, as the instrument was inserted in search of the ball.

"The wound is inflamed," the Doctor said; "it is lucky that you called in medical aid; ten hours more and it would have been too late. It is not dangerous, with proper care."

Then another groan of pain, and the Doctor held up the little conical piece of lead between his thumb and forefinger.

"There it is, you see."

A long-drawn breath of relief came from George's pallid lips.

"That's a weight off my mind," he muttered. "I was beginnin' to fear that I should lose the arm."

"As I have said, if it had not been attended to within ten hours, it would not only have cost you your arm, but in all probability your life." The Doctor spoke gravely.

"A narrow squeeze, eh?" Dominick exclaimed, with a light laugh.

"Yes; and even now you must be careful and not take cold; the wound is very much inflamed."

"That comes from neglecting to take care of it," the

wounded man confessed; "but I had no idea I was so badly hurt. How much do I owe you, Doctor?"

"Nothing," replied the stranger, wiping the instruments off carefully and returning them to the box.

"Nothing?" exclaimed Dominick, in astonishment.

"That is correct," said the stranger, quietly. "I am not a regular doctor, and do not practice for a living, but I am always glad to place my professional skill at the service of any one who needs it."

"Men like yourself are rare in this world," Dominick remarked, thoughtfully.

"Is that true?" queried the stranger, smiling as he spoke.

"And now let me tell you what you must do to complete your cure," he continued. "Apply some cooling dressing to the shoulder, and remain in absolute quiet until the wound closes; that should be within a week at the most."

"I'll have it attended to the moment my wife comes back."

The Doctor turned toward the door, and the invalid watched him with a nervous face.

"Oh, Doctor!" Dominick said, suddenly.

"Well?" and the stranger turned toward the speaker.

"If I might ask another favor of you—"

"Certainly; what is it?"

"If you will keep your visit here a secret—"

"Of course," the visitor answered. "Your wife requested that, and I willingly gave her the promise."

"There are sometimes reasons for things which a man can not explain."

"Oh, yes, I understand that," the surgeon remarked, in an absent sort of way, as he took a long look at the man stretched upon the bed.

Dominick observed the glance, and wondered at it.

Then the Doctor turned again and advanced to the door; but, with his hand upon the knob, again he hesitated, and turning, faced the sick man. From the expression upon his face it was evident that he wanted to speak, but hesitated to do so.

There was a slight pause, during which Dominick surveyed the man, curiosity strongly written on his face.

"I beg your pardon," the visitor said, abruptly, "but your face is very familiar to me, and yet I can not remember that I have ever met you before."

George was somewhat astonished, for he was sure that he had never seen the stranger before. He therefore shook his head.

"You do not remember to have ever met me before?" the Doctor remarked.

"No; in fact I am almost certain that we never met until you came into this room to-night," was Dominick's confident answer.

"It is very strange indeed," the visitor said, in a dreamy sort of way. "I could have sworn that I had met you before—not recently, but a long time ago."

Again Dominick shook his head. "I am certain we never met before. I have a most excellent memory for faces, and I should not be likely to forget one as strongly marked as your own."

"Have you any objections to tell me your name?" the Doctor asked, suddenly.

Dominick thought over the question for a minute or so.

"I don't know why I should have any objections," he at length answered. "I am sure that you would not use the knowledge to my disadvantage."

"I give you my word as to that," the other said, quickly. "I only wish to know to satisfy myself upon a certain point, and I freely promise to forget your name the moment the door of this room closes behind me."

"That is fair enough," Dominick continued; "and as you have favored me I will try and oblige you. My name is George Dominick."

The Doctor shook his head; it was plain that he was disappointed; then he asked: "You were born in this city?"

"Yes."

"Are your parents living?"

"No, both dead. My mother died when I was only an infant—I do not remember her at all—and my father some four years ago."

"It is a most singular circumstance," the visitor said, reflectively; "your face reminds me of a woman whom I once knew, and yet you do not in any particular feature resemble her at all."

"That is strange."

"Yes; her eyes were brown, while yours are blue; her hair dark also, and yet, the very moment I beheld your face, you put me in mind of her."

"What was the name of the woman?" demanded Dominick.

The question was but an idle one, and he himself, if questioned, could not have explained why he asked it.

"Lina Aton."

"A strange name," Dominick remarked. "I do not think that I ever hear it before."

"Yes, it is strange; well, good-night, and I hope that you will speedily recover."

The Doctor passed out of the door into the darkness of the entry.

CHAPTER XI.

HUNTED DOWN.

As the Doctor advanced along the narrow dark entry toward the head of the stairs, he became conscious that some one was in the passage-way; he could hear the quick breathing, and then the rustle of a woman's dress fell upon his ear. He guessed at once that it was the wife of his patient, so he paused, and the woman came up to him.

"Well, Doctor," she inquired, anxiously, "is there any danger?"

"Not the slightest unless he takes cold. I have extracted the ball."

"I am so thankful!" with a sigh of relief. "Here is five dollars, Doctor; is that enough?"

As she spoke, the woman endeavored to put the bill into his hand, but he gently repulsed her.

"I do not require any pay, madam," he said, firmly, but kindly. "I am not a regular practitioner; only an amateur. It would be downright robbery to take pay for the slight service I have rendered."

She did not attempt to force the money upon him, realizing that the effort would be fruitless.

"You are very kind, indeed, sir," she said, in a voice full of gratitude; "and I trust you will not feel hurt if I request that you will not mention your visit here to any one."

"Certainly not, madam!" he replied, gravely. "Rest assured I will keep it a profound secret; and if you should have any further need of advice, do not hesitate to call upon me. I shall be most happy to oblige you."

"Thank you, sir; I shall not forget your kindness, although I may never have the opportunity to repay you for it. Good-night, sir!"

She passed swiftly along the entry, and entered the room wherein the wounded man lay, while the Doctor proceeded down-stairs, his mind busy in deep reflection.

"It is very singular," he muttered, as he descended the narrow stairs; "but the very moment my eyes fell upon the face of this man, Lina's image rose before me; and yet there is not a single individual feature in his face that resembles her. It is only in the general expression. If she had married a man of the German type, large, blonde—a very fair-haired Saxon—the child of that union would have looked like this Dominick. It is only a fancy of mine, however, for he knows both his parents, and can not be the descendant of this girl who possessed the face of an angel and the heart of a fiend."

Pondering over the dark memories of the past, the olive-faced stranger descended into the street.

The girl, Molly Bawn, concealed in a neighboring doorway, was eagerly awaiting him.

"Oh, Mister! come here, quick!" she exclaimed, mysteriously, as he came from the door of the tenement-house, and she stuck close to the place of concealment as she spoke.

"What's the matter, Molly?" he demanded, advancing toward her.

"The cops! Come into the doorway, quick!" she cried, with fiery energy; and as she spoke, she reached out her little hand, as if to pull him into the darkness of the doorway.

"What of them?" he inquired, taking a position by her side.

"They're arter somebody, and I thought maybe that it was you," his little companion explained.

"How do you know that they are after somebody?"

"Why, I see'd 'em!" was the confident reply.

"When?"

"Just arter you went inter that old barracks with that woman. Two of 'em came down the street, an' they had a talk right in front of here, an' I know'd 'em. One of 'em was Cap'n Murphy, an' the other a pliceman on this beat; an' they're arter somebody in that house—the one you went into, an' I thought maybe that it was you."

"I guess they are not after me," the Doctor remarked; but as he spoke, the thought came to him that he could easily tell who the officers of justice were after if they sought some one in the tenement-house which he had just quitted.

Then the idea occurred to him to warn the parties of whom he guessed the officers were in search.

"You are sure, Molly, that the police are after some one in that house?" he said.

"I bet you!" replied the girl, emphatically. "I heered Cap. Murphy say so when he passed by here. He p'nted right to that old barracks an' sed, 'He's in the upper front room,' an' then I didn't hear no more!"

"It is Dominick, then!"

The quick ears of the girl caught the muttered words.

"Did you say Dominick?" she exclaimed, impulsively; "an' is it him they're arter an' not you?"

"They are not after me, that's a sure thing," he replied.

"I bet you I'm glad!" cried Molly.

"You know Dominick?"

"Yes, when I see him."

"He's in an upper front room in that house and sick; I'm afraid that it is he the police are after."

"Why, what has he done?" Molly asked, in wonder.

"I don't know that; but, Molly, I think we ought to let him know the officers are after him."

"That's so!" she exclaimed. "S'pose I run up stairs an' tell 'em that old Murphy is arter 'em?"

"Just what I was going to suggest," the Doctor said. "Do you think you can find the room? It's on the upper floor front."

"I know the one, I guess! I see'd a light in it as I was comin' down the street."

"Just knock at the door and tell Mrs. Dominick what you heard; say that I sent you; say the Doctor—they'll understand who you mean."

"I'll do it up first rate!" cried Molly, stepping down to the sidewalk, but then in a second she hopped back to her hiding-place again.

"It's too late!" she cried. "There's the peepers on the other side of the street now."

The girl's sharp eyes had detected the truth. On the opposite side of the street, approaching with measured steps, were five men; four of them wore the blue uniform of the Metropolitan Police, while the fifth was clad in plain clothes. These all crossed the street and halted in front of the tenement-house.

"That big man is old Murphy," the girl said, in a whisper.

From their concealment the Doctor and Molly commanded a view of the squad, and were also near enough to hear their conversation.

"I suppose that we might as well go for him, right away," the police captain said, addressing the gentleman in dark clothes, who was one of the detectives from "Head-quarters."

"Yes; he's up-stairs, safe enough. I tracked his wife from her father's place here, this evening, and I found out from one of the people in the house that there was a young man with blonde hair and mustache lived with his wife in the front apartments, on the upper floor. It's our bird, fast enough."

"Do you suppose that he will offer any resistance?" Murphy asked.

"I think not," the detective replied. "If Mickey Shea spoke truth, he's pretty badly hurt."

"You and I had better go up together; that will be enough," the police captain said.

"Just so," and into the tenement-house went the officers, leaving the three "Metropolitans" on guard at the door.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WORKINGMAN.

CHRISTOPHER WALEBONE was a man of sixty, a heavily-built, gray-haired, pig eyed man, with a fat, unmeaning face, always untidy-looking in his appearance, despite the care of his two daughters; his necktie was never properly adjusted, and his frowsy pepper-and-salt suit hung baglike, upon him.

A decided character was the "hard-handed workingman," as Walebone delighted to call himself.

Staggering up the street with uncertain steps, returning from his accustomed haunt, the corner liquor store, Walebone beheld his daughter and the young fishman seated so cozily together upon the coal-box of the Dutch groceryman. He at once paused in his unsteady progress and lifted both eyes and hands to heaven as if appealing for the clouds to fall and hide the terrible sight from his view.

The girl regarded the movement in dismay. That pantomime revealed to her the state of her father's mind as plainly as though he had expressed his ideas in words.

"Oh, run, Billy!" she exclaimed, nervously; "father don't like to see you here, I know!"

"Nary run," responded the courageous young fishman. "I ain't afraid of the old snoozer, if he is your dad. I might as well cheek it out now as any other time."

Then Walebone, who had halted a dozen yards or so away, looked around him for a moment as if in search of something, and a moment after lifted his nose high in the air as if inspired by intense disgust.

"Oh, how it smells of fish!" he cried, in a loud and sonorous voice, as though he was addressing his remarks to a crowd assembled in the street and utterly ignoring the two who sat on the coal-box, side by side. "Oh, how it does smell of fish," he repeated; "of fish that are not fresh, and whose rankness smells to heaven. Bah!"

The blood of Billy West boiled in his veins; the stubby hair on his tightly-cropped head rose in indignation, and it is more than probable that if the girl had not pressed the hand of her lover within her own soft palm, the indignant fishman would have "gone" for the aged Walebone, there and then.

After he had relieved his mind, Walebone again advanced, and as he came close to the door of the house, he pretended to see the couple on the coal-box for the first time. Immediately he straightened himself up and bowed with stately dignity to West, a salutation which that gentleman returned in a very sulky manner.

"If my eyes do not deceive me, I have the pleasure of beholding my esteemed friend, Mr. West," Walebone said, with stolid dignity—"a merchant in the fish trade. Ah, Mr. West, you do not visit my humble mansion often enough. Why do you not let us see more of you? 'Oh, Willy, we have missed you!'"

Considering that the young fishman visited the lively daughter of the house of Walebone seven nights a week, on the average, it will be seen that the stern parent of the fishman's love spoke sarcastically.

But, when it came to chopping, Jack was as good as his master, and Billy West had not been brought up among the fish-boys of Fulton Market for nothing.

"I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure, Mr. Walebone," Billy retorted, with a great deal of mock respect; "the fact is, I'm kept so busy at my trade that I don't have much time to make calls in, but hereafter I'll try to come and see you oftener, and I feel very much obliged to you for your kind invitation."

Walebone gazed at the two for a moment, with a stolid face, supporting himself by holding on to the doorway with one hand; he was not so much under the influence of liquor as not to understand that he had gotten the worst of the first bout.

"Artemisia, eldest and fairest bud now left of the Walebone stock, I have been thinking of making you a present," said the old man, slowly and ponderously. "You have ever been a dutiful daughter and you have always obeyed your father's lightest wish in regard to the company you keep." More sarcasm on the part of the aged Walebone, which made Billy grind his teeth, and fervently wish that he could give the old soaker one lick "for luck." "You have always obeyed your father," repeated the old man, "your poor, aged, worked-out father, who is but as a worm trodden on by the foot of the world—who is a down-trodden workingman, not a bloated aristocrat, not even a wealthy fish-merchant," (another touch at Billy), "but he is an honest man; though his coat is ragged, it covers the heart of one of nature's noblemen. I am a mechanic. I do not blush to own it—I am a mechanic!" and Walebone gesticulated wildly with one hand; he had sense enough left to know that if he tried it with the other he would lose his balance, so he clung tightly to the side of the door.

"Where are you working now, anyway, old man?" put in Billy, suddenly, much to the disgust of Walebone; but he was equal to the occasion, and paid no attention to the interruption.

"I am a workingman—a hard-handed son of toil!" exclaimed Walebone, with a great deal of dignity, "and despise the bloated aristocracy who thrive on the life-blood of hard-working men like me. But, a workingman *has* feelings, even if he is trodden on. I love my children, and, Artemisia, in my hours of toil I think of you, and I have determined to make you a present. I am going to buy that coal-box that you now sit on from Dutch John, and give it to you. For the last three years this eminent fish-merchant, Mr. West, and you have sat on that coal-box nearly every night, and I feel within my soul that you ought to own it."

"I'm very much obliged to you!" exclaimed Billy, quickly, "but, as for me, if I want this here coal-box, I kin buy it for myself without axing any odds from any two-legged man, and if Dutch John don't like my roosting on his old box, all he's got to do is to spit out, and I'll bet two dollars and a half that if he opens his head to me, there'll be the worst whipped Dutchman round this block that ever was seen."

"Artemisia, it is time for you to retire," said the old man, gravely, paying no attention whatever to the excited fisherman. "Your poor father has come home, tired out by his daily toil, and requires you to pull off his boots."

The daughter jumped down from the box and Billy followed her example.

"Good-night, Billy," said the girl, offering her hand, in spite of the scowl upon the face of the old man, as he beheld the action.

"Say, Arty, I'm going to speak right out to the old rooster!" exclaimed Billy, in an undertone to the girl.

"Oh, don't, Billy!" she protested, half frightened.

"What's the use of waiting?" the fisherman demanded, in remonstrance, and then he walked up to Walebone, who was still gravely steadyng himself by the door.

"See here, Mr. Walebone, Arty and me has bin a-keepin' company now for 'bout three years, and I think it's about time that we fixed things. Kin I have her? *Say!*"

For a moment the old man glared upon the free-spoken fisherman, as though unable to comprehend his meaning, then slowly he raised his hand toward the sky.

"I can not!" he cried, with a wail of anguish, "I can not give my daughter to this fish-merchant. I could not fold her to this hard-handed workingman's heart, with the odor of salt mackerel and stale porgies fresh upon her. I could not look upon her face—her fresh, young, innocent face—and think that she depended for her daily bread upon a man who skins eels and opens clams for a living. I can not!" and then the old man broke down in a torrent of sobs, much to Billy's disgnst and the girl's alarm. "I have set my heart upon her marrying a hard-handed workingman like I am; a man who earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. If she should marry you, the very first time you drove your cart through this street and cried 'claims, two shillin' a hundred,' my heart would break. Become a workingman, like I am, and she's yours; good-night—Heaven bless you, though you are not a son of toil!"

And then the old bummer staggered in the door, leaving Billy "mad" and Artemisia sorrowful.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MYSTERY.

THE cool and self-possessed Business Manager looked at the actress in utter astonishment. He had never seen her excited about any thing befor. A woman of ice, holding her passions under an iron rule she was always calm and

quiet; but, now, with her flashing eyes, quivering lips and burning cheeks, she seemed like another being.

Medham came suddenly to the conclusion that he did not really know the woman, whom but a minute before he had fancied he thoroughly understood.

Medham did not speak; he waited and watched.

For a minute or so the fiery beauty stood quivering with passion in the center of the room; then, suddenly, catching a look at herself in the mirror at the other end of the apartment, a low laugh came from her lips, and, with a petulant cry, she sunk back again into the chair from which she had risen.

The bouquet had rolled from her lap to the floor.

Medham rose as if to pick it up, but with a gesture the lady restrained him.

"Let it stay there," she said, listlessly; "sit down and tell me all about this gentleman—what did you call his name?"

Medham laughed.

"Very well played indeed, Miss Desmond," he exclaimed, with a bow of mock politeness; "but you can't humbug me; the pupil must not attempt to deceive the master. You will do me the justice to admit that I have taught you acting; so don't try acting upon me."

Medham resumed his seat, but his quick eyes noticed the contraction of the pupils of the brown-black eyes, and the peculiar lines which appeared about the mouth.

Already the beautiful student chafed at the slightest touch of the rein.

"Well, I will not attempt to deceive you," she said. "I do remember the name of the gentleman. Now tell me all about him."

"I suppose he is not a stranger to you, by the surprise my announcement of his name caused," Medham said.

"The name is familiar to me," the girl replied, evasively, "but whether the man is or not, is a question I can not answer until I know something about him. Come, tell now, that's a dear, good fellow!"

"I don't really know a great deal about him," Medham answered. "I was introduced to him last night by one of our managers, who merely said that he was one of the great men of New York, very wealthy, and a great patron of the drama. He's one of the big guns in politics, has been a Judge, I believe; yes, I am sure that one of the gentlemen called him Judge, when we were drinking champagne together."

"Is he married or single?" asked the actress, abruptly.

"A widower, I think," Medham replied, reflectively. "I remember that Palmer said the Judge had not been to the theater for some time, on account of the death of his wife."

The actress remained silent for quite a long time, while Medham watched the expression upon her features, but he could not read her thoughts; the face was as a blank to even his sharp eyes.

"Has he any children?" she asked, with evident interest.

"No; I heard some one of the party mention that fact and wonder to whom the Judge's immense wealth would descend at his death."

"Now describe him to me," she demanded, in a tone that distinctly betrayed some eagerness.

"He's a man of fifty or thereabouts, I should say, although he shows very few signs of age; not a gray hair visible, if I remember aright; large and portly in form, full face, yellow mustache and hair, and a pair of full blue eyes."

"It is he!" the actress murmured to herself.

"Does the description answer?" the other inquired.

"Yes, I think so, although I have not seen him for years," she made answer.

It was now Medham's turn to look astonished.

"For years, eh?"

"Yes; if it is the same."

"You must have been quite young then."

"Yes; I was a child."

The lip of the actress curled contemptuously as she spoke. Medham could not understand the reason for it. The whole matter was a puzzle to him.

"Now, tell me what he said about me," she demanded, abruptly.

"Very little to me," Medham replied.

The actress looked disappointed.

"He only said that you were a very talented young lady, and that there was a very bright future in store for you if you persevered in your profession."

"That is what they all say," the "bright particular star" exclaimed in contempt.

"But Palmer told me before I met the Judge that he was very much impressed with you, and had ordered one of the lower boxes to be reserved for him every night during your engagement."

"That is a compliment."

"Yes; not only a compliment, but good hard, solid cash," replied the Business Manager, with an eye to the main chance; "I wish that a half a dozen of your other admirers would do the same thing."

"How much was in the house last night?" the actress asked, abruptly changing the subject.

"Guess!"

"Twelve hundred dollars?"

The Business Manager whistled.

"My dear, you mustn't imagine that every one that comes in front pays for it."

"I allowed for a large number of dead-heads, for they sit on the stage that there must be from fifteen to eighteen hundred in."

"The people on the stage are generally bad judges."

"But how much was there?"

"Eight hundred dollars—a few dollars over that; I forget exactly how much."

"That is not so bad," the lady said, thoughtfully.

"No, not after playing in the West for from fifty to three hundred per night."

"We shall make some money out of this engagement, then?"

"Yes, a couple of thousand dollars at the least."

"There is money on the stage, then?"

"For one out of a thousand," replied Medham, dryly; "the rest make a bare living."

"About this Mr. Bruyn."

"Well, what of him?" demanded the Manager, surprised at the sudden question.

"He did not speak as if he had ever seen me before?"

"No," replied Medham, much astonished at the question.

"Or that I reminded him of any one?"

"No."

"Ah."

Now Medham's curiosity was excited.

"But have you ever met this gentleman before?" he asked. The actress appeared to be astonished at the question.

"Why, what should put that into your head?"

"From what you have said about him, you appeared to be acquainted with him—at least one would think so."

"You do not seem to understand that I might know a great deal about a gentleman occupying a prominent position in the world—as this gentleman does—and yet not be personally acquainted with him," she replied, quietly.

Medham understood at once that he was not to ask any more questions in regard to the matter.

"If he wants an introduction shall I give it to him?" said the Manager.

"Yes," replied the actress, promptly.

"All right." Medham took up his hat to leave. "I say, Nell, if you should happen to fascinate the Judge, that would be better than acting. What a shine you could cut as his wife!"

The girl's lip curled in contempt.

"That can never be."

Her words were decided, and Medham departed, considerable mystified.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HAWK'S SWOOP.

UP the narrow stairs of the tenement-house Captain Murphy and the detective from head-quarters proceeded with cautious steps; not that they feared alarming the man whom they were after, but the entry was dark and the turnings abrupt.

"I suppose that I may as well have my revolver ready in case resistance is offered," Murphy whispered.

"Hardly necessary, captain," the detective replied; "the man is too badly wounded to try that game."

"But if there should be any of the gang there?" Murphy suggested.

"Not likely," replied the detective, tersely.

"They're a rough set—river rats, you know; knock a man in the head almost as soon as look at him. I've had my eyes on the gang for a long time, but have never been able to get one dead to rights, yet."

"I've got the Rats this time," the detective exclaimed, in a tone that betrayed a great deal of satisfaction.

"That's more than any other man ever could say," the police captain remarked. "I wonder how you contrived to get the crowd in a hole?"

"A little streak of luck and a quick following of the luck up," the gentleman from head-quarters rejoined, complacently. "You see, the Englishman reported the loss of the diamond jewelry at head-quarters, about midnight, and the report of the fight between the harbor force and the thieves reached there about the same time. From the description I jumped at once to the conclusion that some of the East-side gang had a hand in the affair, although it was really a cut above their way of doing business; more in the bank-robber style. I started on the scent at once, and by three o'clock in the morning I had a clue to the man I wanted. I ran across a dock-thief down by Catherine Market who used to run with this Mickey Shea, but has been out with him for some time, for some ill-treatment on Mickey's part, and of course my bold laddie was only too glad to 'give Mickey away.' He told me that he had seen Mickey and another one of his gang about twelve o'clock, going up Market street, supporting a man between them, who was either very drunk or badly wounded. As luck would have it, he knew the man, too, one George Dominick. I guessed at once that it was our Gentleman George, and saw that I was on the right track. The sergeant of the police-boat reported that he believed one of the Rats to be wounded in the skirmish on the river. I understood the trick. Dominick, down on his luck, had happened to learn in some way, of the diamonds that the Englishman had, and had gone in with Mickey Shea and his crowd to relieve the Briton of the sparklers. As I told you,

the moment I heard of the affair, I knew that it was too nice a stroke of business for any of the common river-thieves. So after receiving this information I went for Mickey Shea instantaneously, and by five o'clock. I had the bracelets on him and my gentleman safely jugged. He stood out for a long time that he was as innocent as a baby in regard to the whole affair, and that he had never seen, heard, or even dreamed of any such man as George Dominick. But the Superintendent and the District Attorney got hold of him, and finally he 'squealed,' and gave the whole thing away."

"Made a clean breast of it, eh?" the captain said, listening intently to the recital as he climbed the stairs after the astute detective.

"Yes, only he either couldn't or wouldn't tell where Dominick was concealed."

"But the woman fixed him!" the captain exclaimed, triumphantly.

"Yes, but if Mickey hadn't peached, I should never have thought of a man like Dominick being concerned in such a job as this one."

"It will be something of a feather in your cap to lug Gentleman George by the heels," said the captain, in a reflective manner.

"You can bet your bottom dollar on that," the detective answered, complacently. "It will be the first time that the steel bracelets have ever closed on his delicate wrists. He's been a deuced lucky fellow, but the pitcher, you know, will get broken at last; but here we are!"

The two men halted in front of a door from the transom over which came a dim light.

The hunters had tracked their prey to its lair, but now hesitated to enter. Did they fear that, tiger-like, the human quarry would turn and rend them?

Softly, and with smothered voices, the two had ascended the stairs and stolen along the entry.

"Shall I kick the door in?" Murphy whispered in the ear of the other.

"No; wait."

The detective stooped and applied his ear to the key-hole, but the key being still in the lock prevented him from viewing the interior of the room.

"Curse the key!" muttered the detective, as he rose from his stooping posture, and as he did so, he came in violent contact with Murphy, who had approached quite close to the door.

"Blazes, you've made my nose bleed, I believe!" Murphy growled, ruefully rubbing his nose with his hand.

Slight as had been the noise of the collision, it was plain that it had attracted the attention of some one within, for they could plainly hear the rustle of a woman's dress and a light footfall moving toward the door.

"She has discovered us—Dominick's wife, I suppose," the detective whispered.

"Better knock and see if she will open; if not, smash the lock in," Murphy suggested.

The detective gave a thundering rap at the door.

No answer came from within.

Again the detective beat his iron-like knuckles against the panels, but elicited no response.

"Let me try my foot at it," Murphy said. "One good kick will smash the lock right in."

The detective stepped aside, and Murphy, bracing himself, dashed his foot violently against the door.

The heavy sole striking just above the lock the door darted wide open as if by magic.

Within the room George Dominick lay, extended on a bed, while Hero, his wife, stood in the center of the apartment, a cocked and leveled revolver in her hand.

Both Murphy and the detective were brave men, used to facing danger in a thousand shapes; but both hesitated when they beheld the woman. There was something in her eyes which said "shoot," as plainly as though the word had been spoken.

Just a second or two the tableau lasted, but Dominick raising his head from the pillow, and catching sight of the detective, broke the silence.

"Jim Lane, eh?" and then with a look of despair, the wounded man sunk back again on his bed.

"Sorry to trouble you, George, but I've come for you," the detective said, blandly.

"How do you do, Mrs. Dominick?" said Captain Murphy, persuasively. "I haven't had the pleasure of seeing you since your marriage."

Still the woman held the leveled weapon at the poise; still the word danger was written on her face.

"I suppose you understand, George, that it is useless to offer any resistance," the detective remarked.

"Yes," with a sullen groan. "Drop your hand, Hero, dear. It's no use making any trouble. I couldn't run even if you winged both of these hawks."

Murphy looked decidedly uncomfortable at the thought.

"Have you a warrant for her too?" George asked, as Hero quietly let down the hammer of the revolver and thrust the weapon into her pocket.

"No; for you alone," the detective replied. "We've got you this time; Mickey has given you away."

George ground his teeth together, and a groan came from his lips.

An hour later and the Tombs prison held Gentleman George.

CHAPTER XV.

NEIL JEMMISON.

A QUARTER to eight, and the large and magnificent theater known as Niblo's Garden was two-thirds full, and the people were still pouring into it.

One of the managers—a dapper, plump, jolly-looking gentleman with a blonde mustache—and Miss Desmond's business agent, Medham, stood near the bouquet-stand, in the front lobby.

"They are coming in pretty fast," Medham remarked, with a look at his watch; "it wants a quarter to 'ringing-up' time."

"Yes; we've got 'em," the manager replied, complacently, carefully twisting the ends of his well-waxed mustache. "Friday night is a bad night, too; we'll have a house tomorrow night that will make you open your eyes. This is a little different from playing in the Western barns which they call opern-houses, isn't it?"

"Yes, rather."

"When we get a house here it means twelve hundred to two thousand dollars. Hallo, there's the Judge—Bruyn, you know; I introduced you to him the other night."

The Judge, with a party of three gentlemen, attended by a colored servant, was just at that moment passing through the lobby on his way to the private box that he had taken for "Miss Desmond's nights," to use the booking term.

The colored servant carried a large bundle, wrapped up in white paper, carefully in his hands.

"Bouquets," said the manager, with a laugh, referring to the parcel that the colored servant bore; "the Judge is a great theater-goer, but I never saw him so interested before. Medham, my boy"—and the manager patted him softly on the back—"there's nothing like a pretty woman to fetch 'em; talent is all very well, but if talent is ugly, talent won't draw, and we run theaters to make money."

And then the manager paused in his observations to bow to an olive-faced, well-built gentleman, dressed entirely in black, who chanced to pass, just at that moment.

"Hallo, who's that?" exclaimed Medham, attracted at once by the stranger. "He looks like a cross between a Spanish prince and a leading tragedian."

"Do you notice what a remarkable resemblance he bears to the pictures of the Napoleon family?" asked the manager, replying to one question by asking another.

"Yes; that is what suggested the Spanish prince; he looks too deuced solemn to suit my ideas of a Frenchman."

"He's a wealthy New Yorker—lives up-town somewhere; I met him first, years ago, in Paris, across the water. He was studying medicine then."

"Oh, a doctor?"

"Yes, but he doesn't practice, I believe; he's enormously wealthy; an uncle died and left him a California gold mine; I heard the story long time ago."

"What's his name?"

"Neil Jemmison."

And leaving the manager and the agent of the "star" to watch the people coming into the theater, and to speculate as to how much money they would take that night, we will follow the dark-faced stranger, who moved amid the butterflies of fashion—the daintily-dressed young gentlemen with roses in their buttonholes and carefully-oiled locks parted in the center—like a very king; not one by accident of birth, but one of the brawny-sinewed rulers of the olden time, who clutched their scepter with the strong arm and maintained it by dint of might, backed by a cunning brain.

Down along the right-hand lobby Neil Jemmison sauntered, until he came to the third door from the stage. Being open, it commanded both a view of the stage and the vast auditorium, now a sea of heads.

The orchestra had just commenced their overture, and the curtain had not yet risen.

Jemmison leaned against the side of the door and listlessly surveyed the "house." We use the term in its theatrical sense, meaning, not the building, but the people in it.

And as Jemmison—the inheritor of the California gold mine, as the chatty manager characterized it—leaned against the side of the door, cold and calm as an iceberg, two short-haired, bullet-headed young men in the lower circle opposite, dressed rather flashily and evidently in the theater strictly on business—in the pickpocket line—and not for amusement, caught sight of the tall, lithe figure framed in the open doorway.

"Oh, Bob!" cried one to the other, nudging him with his elbow, "if there ain't the 'Doctor,' an' dressed like a sport!"

The other took a good look and became satisfied that the dark-faced gentleman in the doorway was indeed the man who, in the slums of the East Side, had been known as "The Doctor."

"I guess that he's here on business too," and then the second night-bird grinned at the first.

The sharp eyes of the two representatives from Water street had detected the truth.

Neil Jemmison and the Doctor were one.

The overture ended—the curtain rose.

Jemmison, like the rest of the audience, turned his attention to the stage.

The play progressed, the story began to slowly unfold itself, and then, after due preparation, the "star of the evening" made her appearance—habited as an Indian girl, a daughter of the great Comanche nation—to a wild burst of music from the orchestra.

A "round" of applause came from the vast audience and half a dozen bouquets fell at her feet—one elegant bouquet coming from the box on the left, occupied by Judge Bruyn and his friends.

The actress bowed her thanks, gathered up her floral trophies, and the play proceeded.

Jemmison, who had sauntered into the theater for an hour's amusement, not knowing what was to be played or who was to play it, had listened to the opening dialogue in his careless, listless way, but on the appearance of Miss Ellen Desmond his manner had undergone a wonderful change.

At first he had started and stared at the stage, and all the time that the vast audience were applauding and the actress was bowing her thanks, picking up her bouquets and depositing them on the table whereon reposed the buffalo-tongue, the supposed product of the young Indian girl's rite, he had been rubbing his eyes and staring at the beautiful girl with her long raven tresses; Miss Desmond wore an "Indian wig" over her own fair locks to carry out the idea of the daughter of the prairie.

"By Heaven! it is the woman, or else I am going mad!" he muttered, between his firm-set teeth. "But her hair was not as dark as that, nor as long."

Then the thought of the stage disguises came to him.

"Oh, what a fool I am; it is a wig she wears; her own brown tresses are underneath. The man who would put such a strange incident as this into a novel would be laughed at, and yet it is reality. The woman that I have searched for amid all the low haunts of crime in this great city—whom I imagined that I would find poor, depraved, a wreck of what she formerly was, flashes before me on the stage of one of the leading theaters of New York, the star of the night—the magnet which has drawn a couple of thousand people together, more beautiful, younger looking—more fascinating, more dangerous than when I first met her, some twenty years ago!"

And, by the time Jemmison had come to the end of his unspoken speech, the actress opened her mouth and spoke.

If the "Doctor" had been astonished at the sight of the young and beautiful Miss Desmond, he was no less surprised when the tones of her voice fell upon his ear.

Again he stared blankly at the stage, then he passed his hand over his forehead and endeavored to call back the sound of the voice of the woman, who, twenty years ago, had been to him as the guardian-angel who held ajar the gates of Paradise.

The face astounded him and the voice perplexed him.

The face was familiar to him; he would have recognized it among a thousand, but the voice—if he had heard it coming from an adjoining apartment and had not seen the speaker, he would willingly have sworn that the owner of the voice was a stranger to him.

"What can this mean?" he muttered, in agitation. "Am I mad or dreaming?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ROSEBUD.

THE speech of the Indian girl was ended; it was a "telling" speech—stage parlance again—full of flowers, freedom—and bathos. Again the audience had signified appreciation of that sort of thing coming from a pretty woman.

Jemmison was in a maze; clear, cool-headed fellow that he was, his brain was in a whirl.

Again he looked upon the sweet, fresh young face of the actress—an Indian girl, white as pearly water-lily; such little inconsistencies are the charm of the drama—and as he looked he was sure that it was the face of the woman who had pillowed her head upon his breast, who had been the mother of his child, but who had wedded herself to evil, and plunging into the world, had disappeared beneath the great life-tide as suddenly and completely as the poor wretch who seeks the dark waters of the rolling wave to find forgetfulness and rest.

But when she spoke, his heart answered not to the voice; it was the tones of a stranger that he listened to.

"Years change voices as well as faces," he muttered. "Time, that has spared her angel-face, may have worked its will upon her voice, and yet, the voice of this woman is like liquid music. So, too, Lina's voice was pleasant to the ear, but far less strong, and with a different ring to this one."

Intently Jemmison watched the progress of the play. Every look, every action of the woman he recognized, and when shyly, during the course of the scene, she withdrew herself from the embrace of her lover, the gallant young American gold-hunter—represented by a mature gentleman of forty, with the obesity of an inn-keeper, and a voice like the roar of a bass-drum—Jemmison remembered how often in the old time, before the wedding-ring had spanned her finger, she had acted in a like manner with him. The coyness was acting then, as now, and the dark-faced man ground his teeth violently as the thought came to him.

When she was silent he was sure that the actress, Ellen Desmond, was the woman whom he had known, years before, as Lina Aton; but when she spoke, he doubted.

The end of the scene came, and the actress disappeared—amid a burst of applause, as usual.

Then, losing all interest in the mimic scene, Neil Jemmison cast his eyes to the floor and meditated.

"Is it, or is it not?" he muttered; like all men who are solitary in their natures, Jemmison communed much with himself. "Shall I satisfy my curiosity, or, now that I am almost certain that I am face to face with the woman that I have sought, shall I pause and not convince myself?"

Long he pondered over the question, but at last he decided. "I'll satisfy myself," he said, shutting his lips firmly together. "Teaching, thorough culture, may have produced the change in the voice; besides, sometimes the voice in singing sounds altogether different from the same in speaking; it may be the same effect here. I will get nearer the stage; perhaps I shall be able to decide, if I am close to the footlights."

Jemmison left his position by the door and walked through the lobby until he came to the door nearest the stage. Opening it, he found that he was within some twenty feet of the magic circle of lights which guarded the realm of the buskined queen.

Four or five young men, elaborately "got up," with flowers, kids and perfumery, were gathered in a little knot just inside the door.

Jemmison, tall and stately, clad in complete black, leaning carelessly against the side of the doorway, appeared like a prince surrounded by a train of bowing courtiers.

Standing as Jemmison did, he could not help overhearing the conversation of the knowing young gentlemen who comprised the group.

"Say, Fred, did you see that bouquet that the Judge threw the little girl?" asked one of the young men, addressing the one next to him.

"I bet you!" replied the other, languidly; "it must have cost ten dollars if it cost a cent. Hang it! what chance can us fellers stand, if a swell like old Bruyn is going to enter for the race? He owns about a dozen banks. I tell you what, fellers, this chicken don't throw away any more stamps on bouquets while that old monster over there is around."

By this time Miss Desmond was on the stage again, and Jemmison, looking over at the box opposite, attracted by the conversation that he had overheard, could not help noticing how visibly Nicholas Bruyn seemed to be impressed by the looks or talents—or both combined—of the actress. And, watching the stage closely, too, as well as the occupants of the box, Jemmison, old theater-goer as he was, could not help noticing that the pretty actress played more directly to the private box than she did to the audience in front.

"Is it possible that she has fascinated a man like Bruyn?" Jemmison asked, again communing with himself. The Judge was well known to Jemmison. He knew his iron nature, and wondered that any woman could cast a spell over him. "It is such women as this fair-faced demon that make men ruin themselves, and then laugh at the mischief they have wrought."

Closely and carefully Jemmison watched the stage until the tableau at the end of the first act came, and the curtain descended. Then he went to the stand in the front lobby and procured an opera-glass.

"This may enable me to penetrate the illusion that art has cast around her, and to decide whether she is the woman that I think she is or not," he muttered, as he sauntered along through the lobby to his old position.

Regaining his former station, he pondered over the memory of the past.

"If it were not for the child, I would let the woman go," he murmured; "but I can not forget the child. I must learn whether it is living or dead. True, I have this poor little waif that I have picked out of the gutter as it were, but still I can not be satisfied until I learn the fate of the other; and learn it I will."

The music ended, the curtain rose on the second act. First came a long scene between the villain of the play, the Spanish commandante, and the guileless Mexican girl; then came Miss Desmond again, and this time amid the raven tresses of her long hair, she wore a half-open white rosebud, evidently selected from one of the numerous bouquets that had been bestowed upon her during the first act.

Jemmison, who had been watching both the actress and the Judge, through his opera-glass, detected the flush of pleasure that came over the massive face of the Judge as he noticed the rosebud in the raven hair.

"He takes it as a signal to him," Jemmison muttered. "But is the web that this woman can weave strong enough to hold so big a fly as Judge Nicholas Bruyn?"

A question which time alone could answer.

Medham had come round, at the end of the first act, with the cheering intelligence to Miss Desmond that there was over a thousand dollars in the house, and he had also asked her if she had noticed that Mr. Bruyn was in the box.

At which the actress had laughed and pointed significantly to the rosebud which she was weaving in amid her hair.

"From him, eh?" Medham inquired.

"Yes; do you think that I would wear it else?" she asked, scornfully.

"It's a splendid idea!" the man of business exclaimed, rubbing his hands together, gleefully. "Every man in front that threw you a bouquet will imagine that that rosebud came from his bouquet. It's a magnificent idea!" Then the manager withdrew.

The actress felt that she had never played better; she tried as she had never tried before; and yet, in all that vast audience, she only cared to gain the applause of one man; and how her heart swelled with triumph as she watched his face and saw it kindle under the influence of her art.

What power like acting to make a vast audience laugh or weep at bare command?

And then, right in the full flush of her triumph, just as she felt that the world was at her feet, begging that her dainty slipper be placed upon its neck; just as she turned away from the handsome features of the millionaire Judge, a face so cold and stern that it chilled the life-blood in her veins, rose out of the vast sea of heads before her as distinct as though the great audience had but one face, and that face was the one that frightened her.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WOMAN'S DODGE.

The fright of the actress lasted but for a second, and then her self-possession returned to her, and she went on with her speech.

That brief hesitation was noticed, both by those engaged in the business of the stage and the vast audience in front, but none guessed its cause except the dark-faced gentleman, who leaned against the side of the doorway, motionless as a marble statue.

The actress played with a strange and fiery energy now, and ever and anon a hectic flame burned in her cheeks, paling the color of the vermillion with which the art of her dressing-maid had adorned her as a corrective of the yellow, ghastly glare cast by the footlights.

The second act followed the first; the third the second, and then the curtain descended, veiling the face and figure of the actress, and the audience began to pour out of the theater.

Jemmison, still undecided and uncertain, followed the throng. Acting upon a sudden impulse, he proceeded at once to the back-door of the theater on Crosby street.

A little crowd of people were hanging around the portal which gave entrance to the charmed precincts of the stage, and a close one-horse carriage was drawn up near by.

The little knot of people around that back-door of the theater were composed of some half-a-dozen of the young gentlemen who usually make themselves so conspicuous in the front of the house, and six or eight half-grown boys, the gods of the gallery, all intent upon seeing the performers in their street-clothes.

Pushing his way boldly through the throng, Jemmison walked up to the door and entered the narrow passage-way which led into the interior of the building.

A bluff, hearty old fellow, in shirt-sleeves, guarded the entrance.

"Is it possible to see Miss Desmond?" Jemmison asked.

The doorkeeper surveyed the questioner for a moment; saw at a glance that he was different from the usual run of gentlemen who besiege the back-door to see favorite actresses, and civilly replied that it was not possible.

"Will a five-dollar bill aid me in any way?" Jemmison inquired. "I thought that I recognized the lady from the front of the theater, and I should like to satisfy myself whether she is really the person I think she is or not."

"It's no use my taking your money, sir," the door-keeper said, honestly. "If I were to let you go inside, you would only be turned out by the first person you met, for they would detect in an instant that you were a stranger. It would cost me my situation, too, and without doing you any good. You couldn't see Miss Desmond even if you were inside. She's in the dressing-room, now, and after she is dressed she will go right home in her carriage."

"Is that her carriage standing outside?" Jemmison asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I am much obliged for the information."

"Not at all, sir," replied the door-keeper, civilly, and then Jemmison retired.

Outside the door, he took up a position on the curbstone near the carriage, a little apart from the knot of loungers who were watching the door.

The people concerned on the stage began to issue from the back-door, and depart for their homes.

First came the scene-shifters and "fly-men"—the workmen who attend to the borders suspended over the stage, representing the sky, drapery, etc.; after them came the supernumeraries—the ambitious young gentlemen who seek, in a lowly way, to gain some knowledge of the histrionic art; then the ladies of the corps de ballet, one by one and two by two, ill-paid and badly dressed, hurrying to their humble homes; then the prominent people, the actors and actresses, began to come forth; their dresses, being more elaborate, required more time for their removal.

Full twenty minutes Jemmison had waited and yet saw no signs of Miss Desmond, but the carriage still remained.

"As long as that stays I am safe to wait," the watcher reflected, as he noticed the dark forms emerging from the door, one by one. "Naturally it will take her some time to dress; a half an hour is not too long a time to allow."

And just as Jemmison had made up his mind that it would be fully ten minutes more before the woman would come for whom he waited, a bright, sharp-looking lad came out of the back-door, went up the driver of the carriage, and said something to him in a low tone, and then went back again into the theater.

The man on the box of the carriage took up his reins, whistled to his horse and drove off up the street.

Jemmison was somewhat astonished at this movement.

"She will not use the carriage to-night then," he muttered; "that is strange. Can it be possible that she has discovered, in some way, that I am here, and thus seeks to throw me off the scent? By Heaven! I am sure now that she is the woman; Ellen Desmond is Lina Aton!"

Then a sudden thought occurred to him.

"Perhaps she has ordered the carriage round to the front of the theater!" he exclaimed; "that is easily ascertained!"

So, without loss of time, Jemmison hurried round to Broadway.

Two or three carriages stood in front of the hotel and near to the entrance of the theater, but a single glance told Jemmison that the vehicle he sought was not among them; all were two-horse coaches; the modest little one-horse *coupe* of the actress was not there.

"I am outwitted!" Jemmison muttered, as he stood in front of the now dark and desolate theater entrance; "but, the very precaution that she has taken to avoid me proves that my suspicion is correct. She is the woman that I think she is. The whole proceeding is strange; she must have discovered that I was in front of the house and anticipated that I would discover and lay in wait for her. I swore to her once that, if she ever played me false, I would kill her with as little mercy as though she was a snake coiled in my path with head upraised to strike. Perhaps she remembers my words and fears that I will attempt to make them good," and, as he spoke, Jemmison laughed bitterly to himself.

His meditations were disturbed by the irruption of some half a dozen young men from the saloon attached to the hotel. They gathered on the pavement right in front of him, and Jemmison discovered that it was the same party who had sat in front of him in the theater.

It was plainly evident the young men had been drinking more strong liquor than was good for them, and that their weak heads were now in a sad state.

"I am done for, Gus!" exclaimed one of them, who seemed to be a sort of leading spirit, and who was elaborately attired in a costume of which a light yellow overcoat and a red necktie were the leading features. "My goose is cooked!"

The tone of the gentleman with the red necktie was despairing in the extreme.

"But is it a sure 'nuff fact, Fred?" demanded another, who was endeavoring to steady himself by the aid of a cane about as big round as a lead-pencil.

"You can bet stamps on it!" replied the first speaker, emphatically.

"Oh, I loved her and she might have been the happiest in the land. But she ran away with Bruyn the lawyer, who came with a German band."

howled the youth, discordantly and disconsolately.

The name of Bruyn attracted Jemmison's attention to the mazudlin utterances of the devotees of fashion.

"Who saw her go, anyway?" asked another of the party, who was holding up the bill-board in front of the saloon with the small of his back, and who, by this simple device, was enabled to preserve a very upright carriage.

"I saw it, myself," said the red necktie gentleman. "I came to the door here, after that first cocktail, while you fellers were chinnin' it inside, and I saw old Bruyn and Palmer talking together, and then Medham—that's Miss Desmond's agent, you know—came out and joined them. I heard him say, 'Wait a minute, she's nearly dressed,' and then he went in again. Oh, gents, when I heard that, and saw that old thief of a lawyer waiting for the woman that I was willing to lavish all my salary on, I felt as if I would have liked to punch his head for him. I stood right here, gents, and saw the woman that I adore get into a carriage with Bruyn and Palmer, and that sneak of a business-agent who promised me an introduction to her, and saw 'em go off—heard old Bruyn tell the coachman to drive 'em to the *Maison Doree*."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUPPER.

As the curtain touched the stage and the actress rose from the mimic couch of death, whereon the Indian girl had yielded up her life to the deadly bullet of the Spanish commandante, she found Medham awaiting her at the wing.

He followed the exhausted girl to her dressing-room where the negress was in attendance.

Miss Desmond sank down breathlessly into a chair.

"Splendid!" exclaimed Medham, enthusiastically. "I never saw you act better than you did to-night. We'll get 'em to-morrow night. I wouldn't take fifteen hundred dollars cash down for the house this minute. Don't you remember, I told you when you were playing in those beastly little one-horse towns, to fifty dollars a night, that the time would come when we'd pull 'em to the tune of a thousand? and after this engagement we can sweep the whole country, my dear; these donkeys of managers will change their note now. I tell you what it is, loveliest of your sex, there's nothing in this world so successful as success."

"Oh, I am tired," the actress murmured, as she removed the raven wig from her head, exposing her own golden tresses.

"Palmer is delighted; he declared that business will still better next week. He's going to put out two thousand extra sheets of printing Saturday night, and I've engaged three men to go and chalk your name on the pavements all over the city, so that when New York wakes up Sunday morning it will see nothing but the name Desmond staring them in the face."

The lip of the actress curled in contempt.

"If I am as talented and attractive as they say I am, I do not see why the people will not come to see me without all this advertising."

"You've got to do it, my dear; you can't hide your light under a bushel, now-a-days, and expect people to see it. Placard on every dead wall, and in every newspaper, that Miss Ellen Desmond is the greatest actress that ever was or ever will be, and two-thirds of the people who come into the theater, and pay for coming, will be perfectly satisfied that she is, before the curtain goes up and they see her at all. The people who pay come to be amused, and it doesn't take much to please them, either; and as for the critics, they are a set of donkeys who wouldn't know good acting if they saw it."

Miss Desmond laughed; she knew the business manager's contempt for the men whom he so cleverly used to advance his own interests.

"Well, I'll say what I came to say, and then get out and let you dress," continued Medham. "Mr. Palmer presents his compliments to you and would like to have the pleasure of your company at a little supper as soon as you are ready; and he would like also to present to you an esteemed friend of his, Judge Bruyn, if you have no objections."

The eyes of the actress flashed, and the hot breath came quick and strong from the parted lips.

"The Judge will make one of the party, then?" she asked.

"Yes; there will only be Palmer, the Judge, and myself."

"I will go, of course!" she exclaimed, with quick decision.

"I tell you it's a clear case," and Medham winked at the actress. "If you play your cards well, it will be the most successful engagement of your life."

"Do you think so?"

Absently she spoke, and the fair brow was clouded over with thought.

Little did the business agent, Almer Medham, know in regard to the past life of the actress, Ellen Desmond.

"I'll tell Palmer that you will come as soon as you are dressed. Do you want the carriage to go home in? You can have it as well as not?"

Medham addressed the negress.

"No, thank you, Massa Medham; I'd rather walk," the servant replied.

"All right; I'll send the carriage off, then. The Judge has his own vehicle outside, two stunning blacks, gold-mounted harness, and all that sort of thing. I'll tell Palmer that you'll go and then come back after you."

Medham withdrew. With the assistance of the negress, Miss Desmond proceeded to discard her fanciful Indian dress and array herself in a walking-garb. Plain and dark was the suit, a somber contrast to her own bright beauty.

Dressed within fifteen minutes from the time that Medham had left, on opening the door of her dressing-room, she found that that gentleman was in attendance.

Together the two proceeded through the now deserted theater to the front of the house, where the manager and the Judge were waiting in the vestibule.

With the urbane gallantry so characteristic of him, the manager introduced the actress to Judge Bruyn.

Modestly, with quiet retirement, Miss Desmond acknowledged the Judge's expressions of pleasure at making her acquaintance.

And as the little party passed from the vestibule of the theater to the carriage in waiting, at the curbstone, the Judge got a good look at the features of the actress. If Miss Desmond had appeared beautiful on the stage, amid the glare of the gas and the illusion of the surroundings, she looked fully as pretty in the dim light shining from the gas-lamps of the street, and clad as she was now in a simple walking-dress, unrelieved even by a single glare of color.

Only a few words of conversation were exchanged during the short ride to the famous restaurant.

But at the *Maison Doree*, in a private room, with a delightful supper spread upon the table, and the sparkling champagne passing freely, the ice of reserve soon melted away, and the conversation became general.

The actress, modest and retiring in her manner, charmed the Judge fully as much with her remarks as with her beauty. Wit and good sense were skillfully blended in Miss Desmond's conversation.

Bruyn felt that he was becoming deeply interested in the beautiful girl; there was a fascination about her which he could not understand. As he looked back over the record of his life he could not remember to have ever met a more charming woman.

And yet, strange to say, at the very moment that he was most enjoying the society of the beautiful and sensible girl, there came over him a peculiar sort of feeling; he could not understand it, could not explain it; could assign no reason for its coming, no reason for its stay. It was like a nervous sort of apprehension—not exactly of danger; in fact, he could not tell what he apprehended, and finally he made up his mind that he was jealous—jealous that any one else might attempt to claim the thoughts of the fair woman, whose face seemed like a truthful crystal mirror whereon faith and goodness alone could shine.

An hour of mirth and social chat, and the supper was ended.

Never had an hour passed more pleasantly.

As the party rose to depart, the Judge gallantly assisted Miss Desmond to don the light sack which she wore, and trusted that it would not be the last time that he should have the pleasure of meeting her.

With great modesty, Miss Desmond thanked the Judge for his kindness, whispered how grateful she was for his kindly words, but said no more.

Bruyn was disappointed; he expected that the actress would have invited him to call. Again he felt the strange sensation creep over him, and this time he was sure that it was jealousy.

As the party crossed the sidewalk to enter the carriage again, a man stalked so near the actress that he could have touched her.

The face of Miss Desmond turned pale, and her eyes flashed. The man was Neil Jemmison, the "Doctor."

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE TOMBS.

LEGAL business took Judge Bruyn down to the Tombs prison on the next morning after the supper with Miss Desmond, the actress.

The Judge saw the party whom he had come to visit, and held a long conversation with him. It was a ward-gang leader who had got into the stern clutches of the law for a little playfulness with a stranger, passing by night through the "stamping-grounds" of the aforesaid politician. The result of the interview between Tim Driscoll—the ward leader—and the guileless man from New Jersey, was that the stranger lost his watch and pocket-book, and got a choking which forcibly conveyed to him an idea of what strangulation consisted.

Tim, retreating in triumph with the spoils of war, had been unfortunate enough to run into the arms of a policeman, and that blue-coated worthy had conveyed the valiant Tim to the Tombs, not without a struggle on the part of the "ward light," though, as the uniform of the policeman, and a chawed-up finger could testify; but a free use of the locust club had soon taken the fight out of Tim, and he had been run into the Tombs in an extremely demoralized manner.

Tim had sent instantly for Judge Bruyn. He had some little claim on the Judge for services rendered on election-day.

The Judge had listened to Tim's story and had quietly informed him, after he had got through, that he thought the chances were just about a hundred to one that he would have a chance to do the State some service at Sing Sing.

Tim listened in holy horror, and his short thick hair almost stood upright at the Judge's words.

"Sure, Judge, dear, ye won't be after lettin' 'em send me up the river?" he exclaimed. "Why, Judge, don't ye remember your last 'lection? I was worth two hundred votes to yeess, in one ward, that day!"

"I am not on the bench now, Tim, and you don't seem to understand that things are changed from what they were."

"Sure, you kin bail me out, Judge—get some of the byes to go me security, an' then I'll hop the bond," Tim cried, anxiously.

"Can't be done, Tim," the Judge announced, decidedly; "can't run in straw-bail as in the old time. I don't think they will admit you to bail at all. They won't, if the man you went through appears to prosecute you."

"Oh, the unhung villain!" exclaimed Tim, in righteous indignation; "sure, I only choked him till he was black in the face. Bedad! he couldn't make more fuss about it if I had kilt him outright!"

"The only way to do is to hire this fellow not to prosecute; but then there's the assault on the officer."

"The murdering thafe!" exclaimed Tim; "sure, if it hadn't 'a bin that he hit me forinst the nose wid his club, I'd have bate the devil out of him."

"The district attorney may take it into his head to make an example of you," the Judge suggested.

"But, Judge, dear, you can run me out of it," the ruffian persisted, persuasively. "Get me out, Judge, and I'll do anything you please for you, from stuffin' a ballot-box to stickin' in a man. Sure, ye know, ye might have an inimy wan of these days, an' it would be mighty handy to have a dacint bye like meself to bate him for you."

"Well, Tim, if I can do any thing for you I'll do it for the old time, not for favors to come, although I'll bear in mind what you've just said."

"You know I'll live up to it, Judge," the rough said. "I'm a man of me word; civil a man breathes that I iver promised a b'ating to that he didn't get it, unless maybe he gave the b'ating to me," added truthful Tim, thoughtfully.

"Who saw your fight with the officer?"

"A whole crowd, an' there wasn't a mother's son of 'em bail the dare to give the 'cop' a whack in the back for me," asserted the ruffian.

"I suppose that you can bring plenty of witnesses to swear that the officer struck you first and that you were only defending yourself against his attack?" ventured the wily Judge.

"Troth an' I can!" replied Tim, promptly. "I can g the names of twenty byes that will swear to any thing you'll provided that you tell them beforehand what you want them to swear to."

"We can arrange that all right," the Judge said, thoughtfully. "I guess we can get at the Jerseyman and buy him off. If he does not appear to prosecute, by bringing a cloud of witnesses we may be able to lighten up the charge of assaulting the officer. By the way, who got the worst of the affair?"

"Sure, an' I did," said the ruffian, ruefully: "the devil of a pliceman used the club on me. It's black an' blue I am from the crown of me head to the sole of me fut. I only tore his clothes; I was drunk at the time, or I would have warmed him so that his own sargeant wouldn't have known him—the murderin' thafe!"

"You had better let the police alone in future," the Judge suggested, dryly, and with a shrewd smile.

"Faith an' I will," returned the rough, promptly; "the next time, I'll lay for 'em behind a corner, wid a thunderin' big brick in me fist."

"Of course you understand that I can not appear in your case in person, at all, but I will see that you have a good lawyer, and I'll have the witnesses come to my office and ask them a few questions, about what they know of the affair."

"Put the question the right way, Judge, an' they'll say yes to every one. It's familiar with courts they are; sorra a wan of them that hasn't been on trial a dozen times at laste. Sure, if I hadn't ran into the arms of the peeler, bein' blind drunk as I was, all the byes would have sworn that I wasn't there at all, at all."

"I'll do what I can for you," the Judge said, rising. "I guess we can pull you through."

"They've set the trial for to-morrow, Judge; it's to railroad me into State Prison, bad 'cess to 'em!"

"We'll try and switch you off on another track," replied Judge Bruyn, with a grim smile. "Keep a still tongue in your head."

And with this parting admonition the lawyer left the cell.

As he walked along the corridor, he happened to glance down to the open space below, and saw a female form, clad in a dark walking-suit, passing across the courtyard.

The Judge recognized the woman in an instant. It was Miss Ellen Desmond, the actress, with whom he had supped on the previous evening!

Bending over the railing, the Judge saw that she was alone, and from the direction in which she was going, guessed that she was about to leave the building.

What could bring the young and pretty actress to the Tombs? Not curiosity, surely, for in that case she would be attended by an escort.

At the head of the stairway, Bruyn met the warden of the prison. Returning his salutation, the Judge proceeded to inquire regarding Miss Desmond.

"The lady in a dark walking-suit, with blonde hair? Ah, yes! I know her," the warden answered; "she is an actress Miss Desmond, playing at Niblo's Garden now."

"Yes, I recognized her, and was somewhat astonished at seeing her here."

"She comes to see one of the prisoners."

"Indeed!" The Judge was again astonished.

"Yes, George Dominick—Gentleman George."

"Never heard of him."

"It's the first time that he has ever been arrested. He's an old offender though; bank-robber; a handsome, dashy fellow, perfect gentleman in appearance."

"Did he send for Miss Desmond?"

"Yes; we only got him night before last; he's got an ugly wound in the shoulder. He sent a note to Miss Desmond, this morning, and in two hours after she was here."

"That's rather strange!"

"Oh, no; he's a handsome fellow, and she probably don't know what a scamp he is."

The warden passed on, leaving Bruyn white with rage and jealousy.

CHAPTER XX.

GEORGE'S VISITOR.

A NARROW prison-cell held Gentleman George within its confines, scantily furnished but scrupulously clean.

George lay extended upon the narrow bed.

His eyes were closed as if in sleep, but the convulsive movement of the muscles of the mouth told that he was not in the embrace of the drowsy god, but wide awake and muttering to himself.

"Will she come?"

Thrice at least he put the question at intervals.

It was the same old story—old since the world was young. The eastern king who claimed that a woman was at the bottom of all mischief in this world, was not so far wrong, after all.

"She must come!" he declaimed, with fierce and fiery utterance, opening his eyes suddenly and staring wildly around him as though he expected to see the face of the woman of whom he spoke, gazing at him from some dark corner of the prison-cell. "She will not dare to refuse to come," he muttered, defiantly, after quite a long pause. "She is bold and reckless enough, but she will not dare to provoke me. She

knows me too well, and she has a wholesome dread of my wrath, cunning and desperate as she is. Let me see," and then the prisoner pulled the ends of his long, blonde mustache in a thoughtful manner. "She will receive my note by noon, then it will take her an hour or so to reflect whether to obey or not. She will think the matter over, see that the consequences attending a refusal may be very unpleasant, and decide that it is better to be my friend than to provoke my enmity, and then will come; so I may expect her about three or four o'clock this afternoon." And, with this conclusion, Gentleman George turned over restlessly on his side.

The imprisoned man was lying on the outside of the bed, fully dressed, with the exception of his coat which lay on the little stool at the head of the bed. As he turned upon the bed, he felt a sudden, sharp twinge of pain shoot through his shoulder, and was thus abruptly reminded of his wound.

"Curse the scratch!" he muttered, fretfully; "I wish that I knew the name of that doctor that Hero brought the other night. The fellow had a touch as light as a feather. If I knew where he could be found I would send for him to attend to this matter. I hate the very sight of these police surgeons."

And then, speaking the name of his wife, brought up a new chain of ideas.

"It would be cursed awkward if Hero and this woman should meet!" he said, musingly; "it would be apt to put me in a precious hobble. Hero, patient as she is, would be apt to make a terrible row, and as for the other one, she would only be too glad of an excuse to throw me. I must take care that neither one surprises the other here. By Jove! between the two women, I should suffer. Hero already has a suspicion that she has a rival, and I must be careful that she does not succeed in proving the suspicion to be truth."

The entrance of one of the prison officials interrupted the meditations of the prisoner.

"A lady wishes to see you, Mr. Dominick," the man announced.

The heart of Gentleman George gave a great leap. His message had been promptly answered.

"What sort of a looking woman is she?" he asked, in quite a careless manner, as if it was but an indifferent matter.

"Rather smallish in size, light hair."

"Well, I suppose that I may as well see her," Dominick said, rising to a sitting posture, perfectly satisfied that the visitor was the one he had expected.

"Let her come up then?" the official questioned.

"Yes; and, by the way, if it is not asking too much, can you arrange it so that if any one else should come to see me while the lady is here, they will not come up until she is gone?"

"Oh, certainly," the officer replied; "that is simple enough. I will leave word down-stairs that you are engaged for the present and do not wish to be disturbed."

"Thanks; I shall be very much obliged if you will have the kindness to do so; and if my lawyer should happen to come—I don't expect him until one or two o'clock though—tell him that I shall not be engaged long, and request him to wait."

"All right; what lawyer is it?"

"Counselor Watt."

"The 'Three-decker'? I know him. I'll attend to it for you." And with this assurance the official withdrew.

"Aha!" cried Gentleman George, gleefully, as the cell door closed after the officer; "there's no chain in the world so strong as fear; boasted love is a silken thread compared to it. Her prompt compliance with my request proves that I still possess my old power over her."

Within a minute, the prison official returned, accompanied by Ellen Desmond, the actress.

The officer politely conducted the lady into the cell and then withdrew.

Miss Desmond was dressed very plainly, as indeed was usual with her, but the dark dress only seemed to enhance her wondrous beauty.

She stood just within the cell, looking at the man whom she had come to visit with a face that was as expressionless as a waxen mask.

George rose gallantly from the bed and advanced to her with outstretched hand.

"You are very prompt indeed!" he exclaimed, as he took the thin, white hand within his own; "permit me to thank you for your kindness."

The cold hand that he clasped so tightly seemed like a nerveless piece of flesh rather than the hand of a fresh, young woman.

"My furniture is rather scanty here," he continued, with a glance around at the narrow prison cell, "but it is the fashion of this hotel. You have your choice between the bed and the stool for a seat; which will you have?"

"The side of the bed will do," she said, coldly and quietly.

George retreated backward a few steps, and Miss Desmond, without further remark, seated herself upon the foot of the low bed. Then George brought the stool and sat down by her side.

"Here at your feet, as in the old time," he said, with a tender expression in his voice; a trick which was utterly lost upon the cold and unimpressible Miss Desmond, as she only curled her lip and looked at him in the most disdainful manner.

George watched her for a moment and then burst into a loud laugh.

"Sentiment is thrown away upon you, eh?" he said.

"Yes," she replied, cold as an iceberg; "I should think that you would know me better than to attempt to treat me as a child or a sentimental school-girl."

"You do not believe in the 'old time,' then?"

"No; what is past, is past; let it rest," she answered.

"It was pleasant, though," he said, reflectively.

"The end was not pleasant," she retorted, quite bitterly.

The prisoner looked at her curiously for a moment.

"That remark, I suppose, was not intended to be complimentary to me," was the prisoner's half-serious remark.

Miss Desmond looked the prisoner straight in the eyes, her face a face of wax as far as any expression was concerned, but she did not reply.

"Am I right in my conjecture?" he asked.

"I should think that your own heart would be able to answer that question without the necessity of referring to me," she replied, very coolly and very calmly.

"And you have not the highest possible opinion of me?" he continued.

"You are quite right in that," was the calm response.

"And yet you came promptly at my request."

"Because I am willing to forget the wrong you have done me, and desire to aid you if I can."

"And that is the reason, eh?" George said, a peculiar expression upon his face.

"Yes, what other reason should there be?" she demanded, her manner a decided contrast to what it had been.

"I'll tell you what the other reason is," he returned, his bold, blue eyes fixed searchingly on the face of the woman. "You are afraid that I shall publish to the world the relationship that existed between Miss Ellen Desmond, the popular actress, who is nightly filling one of the largest theaters in the country with an overcrowded audience, that goes away raving of the youth, beauty and talent that they have seen, and George Dominick, better known to police officials as Gentleman George, the bank-robber, confidence-man and thorough-paced scoundrel—the man who lives by his wits and trades on the weakness of human nature, who believes that 'property is robbery,' and acts on that motto."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REQUEST.

With a cold and quiet face the woman listened to the speech of the prisoner—a speech which veiled a threat, and veiled it so thinly that she had no difficulty in discovering it. The face was calm, expressionless, except that there was a latent gleam of fire in the eyes.

"Perhaps you do me injustice?" she half queried.

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed; "I am quite sure that I am correct when I say you simply come to see me for fear I should speak; for fear I should tell the world that Miss Ellen Desmond, the favorite actress, the sparkling, brilliant dramatic star, who bids fair to reign as a very queen in the Thespian world, has stood in a very intimate relation with the wounded River Rat, who occupies room 40 in the well-known hotel commonly called the 'Tombs.'"

"Do you judge all the world by yourself?" she asked, sarcastically.

"That is quite a sharp reply, isn't it?" he retorted, disdainfully; "like a skillful move in chess, you attack me while you defend yourself. But, to answer your question, I may not judge all the world by myself, but I do judge you. I think that I know you. You are a woman and I am a man, but there is precious little difference in our disposition. I did not believe that there was a person in the world so like myself until I met you."

"You think, then, that if our fortunes were reversed—if it was I who occupied the prison cell and you who was following a successful career and joying in the triumphs of the world, it would be fear alone that would make you own that there had ever been aught in common between us two?"

"Yes," he replied, quickly and decidedly.

"You are worse than I thought you," she said, coldly and contemptuously.

"No, more honest than you thought me. I do not wear a mask in the presence of a confederate, and try to make her believe in the trick that has deceived the world. I am what the world calls a bold, bad man. If there is a hereafter, and men are punished there for the deeds done in the flesh, the chances are that I shall suffer. But, if my theory be correct, that when we die we die, and there all ends, the future will trouble me but very little."

"I do not suppose that you sent for me to discuss such an abstruse subject," she said, betraying decided tones of impatience.

"I had forgotten how distasteful such subjects are to you," he replied, with a light laugh. "You are like a child in the dark, who buries his head under the bed-clothes and thinks by the act to shut out the sight of the hobgoblins which exist only in his fancy. You would stab a man with your eyes shut, and then afterward try and persuade yourself that you had not done the deed, because you did not see the blow."

"You are very complimentary," an ominous light in her dark eyes.

"I am only trying to make you see yourself as you really are, or, to speak more correctly, to make you own the truth that you know."

"Let us stop the discussion!" she exclaimed, impatiently; "it will not benefit you nor profit me. You sent for me and I have come. Now then, what do you wish?"

"Money," returned Gentleman George, laconically.

"I presumed as much."

"I am in a hole, and I need assistance to get out of it."

"The expedition that you had in prospect when I met you in Market street was a failure, then?"

"Yes; did you read the account in the newspapers of a fight between some of the river-thieves and the Harbor Police, in which one of the policemen was shot and dangerously wounded?"

"I never read any thing in the newspapers but the theatrical articles," she answered.

"Well, there was a row on the river, and one of the metropolitans came pretty near receiving his passport to the other world?"

"And you shot the man, I suppose?"

"I'll tell you that better after I hear the evidence," he replied, laughing. "But one thing I can tell you, and that is that I have got an ugly wound in my shoulder, and it is not over and above pleasant."

"What a pity that the police didn't send the ball through your heart," she continued, with scornful accent.

"Well, that is a nice speech for you to make," he was constrained to say, just a little staggered at the coolness of the woman.

"I speak exactly as I think," she replied, calmly. "You made a few remarks a little while ago, about wearing masks and concealing thoughts; I trust that you will do me the justice now to believe that I do not wear a mask to you, and that I speak freely the thoughts that are in my mind."

"And yet, only a few minutes back it appeared to me that you were trying to persuade me that some other motive than fear of what might happen, if you refused to come, had made you obey my wish so promptly?"

"It was not fear that made me come," she replied; "it was a wish to serve you if I could."

"Then why do you say that it was a pity I was not shot through the heart instead of the shoulder?" he demanded, in some little astonishment.

"Have you never met with some poor, unfortunate mortal, afflicted in such a way that involuntarily you have exclaimed that death would be a blessing?" she asked.

"Oh, that's the idea, is it?" he exclaimed, making a wry face. "I am so utterly bad that the best office a friend can perform for me is to wish me dead, eh?"

"Yes."

"Did it ever occur to you that you are in about the same boat—that, when Old Nick down below picks out a particularly hot corner of his realm for my abiding-place, a similar spot will be reserved for you?"

"Whatever evil deeds I may have committed, I have tried to atone for them by sincere repentance; besides, I have not sinned against the world one-tenth part as much as the world has sinned against me," she answered, with much feeling.

"That is the cant of the Pharisee," George retorted, contemptuously. "Sin until the eleventh hour, then repent and be saved; I am not wicked by nature, I am only what the cruel world has made me." Bah! I have no patience with such pretenses. I fight the humans who are more fortunate than I in worldly wealth, because I think that I have a right to fight them. The Wall street broker made his money by gambling in stocks, cheating by means of lying reports, robbing by pushing weaker men than himself to the wall, precisely the same as the foot-pad who throttles his victim until he gives up his money. The merchant robs his customers, tricks them in measure and in quality; the manufacturer grinds down his hands, produces his goods at starvation wages to them, and literally coins his money out of their life-blood. If it is a sin to rob these men, then I am a sinner, and on my head be my deeds. But, now to business; as I have told you, I am in a hobble, and I want some money."

"How much?"

"That depends entirely upon what you can spare. I don't want to rob you; the world has gone badly with me for some time past, or I should not have had to trouble you; but once I am free from this difficulty the fiend will be in it, if I do not make up for lost time. The police think they have got a strong case against me, for one of the River Rats—the actual leader of the gang, too—has turned State's evidence and they expect on his testimony to convict me."

"Will a hundred dollars be enough?" she asked.

"For the present, yes; but is that all you can spare? Mind, this is only a loan; I will pay it back to you, and with compound interest if you like, within thirty days after I am free from this den."

"No; I can let you have four hundred more by Saturday."

"That will be quite enough to see me through," George said, gleefully.

The woman rose, walked toward the door, then turned abruptly.

"George, it is not pleasant to have the thought coming to me every now and then that I am in fetters," she said, slowly.

"You wish me to free you, then?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I am agreeable," he said, carelessly; "the matter can be arranged easily enough. I'll send the proper man to you."

"When?"

"As soon as I am out of this scrape; it won't be long; be patient."

"Have I not been patient?" the woman asked, a world of meaning in her voice; then she said "good-by," and departed.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE THREE-DECKER.

GEORGE seemed like a different man after his visitor's departure. The restless, impatient creature who, stretched upon the bed, had so closely calculated upon the time when his request should be fulfilled, was now a joyous hopeful aspirant for freedom.

"Aha!" he cried aloud, rubbing his hands together, "the sinews of war are provided; now to make a good fight for liberty."

Then the thought came to him of the man who had so basely betrayed him to the authorities.

"Curse that Mickey Shea!" he exclaimed, grinding his teeth; "I'll be even with him for this job. If it had not been for him I should never have been mixed up in the affair at all. Let me once get out of these ugly walls, and I'll square the account with the cowardly hound. It serves me right, though," he muttered, "for allowing myself to have anything to do with such beggarly beasts. If I had but waited and bided my time, some good fat operation might have fallen in my way; some job where I might have turned up thirty or fifty thousand dollars at a single stroke, instead of that paltry sum that I did get. There's one consolation, though, I've got the diamonds, and neither Mickey Shea nor his cut-throat gang shall ever receive a single cent from them."

Again the cell-door opened and the officer appeared, conducting a tall, portly man with a double-chin and a fat face; a man of huge dimensions and of solid tread. This was the celebrated criminal lawyer, Counselor Watt, better known, perhaps to the frequenters of the 'Tombs' police court by the appellation of the "Three-Decker," the name probably bestowed on him from his resemblance in size to the frigates of the walls-of-oak period. And, in reality, the counselor, in his ponderous way, sailed about amid the lesser lights of the various court-rooms much as a three-deck war-vessel of the Napoleon time would have sailed amid a fleet of merchantmen that she had been detailed to protect.

Counselor Watt practiced solely in the criminal court. A man really of decided talent in the law, and well versed in every trick and quibble possible in a desperate case, he was the first lawyer retained when any leading "operator" in the art of getting-money-without-working-for-it fell into trouble, and was "gathered in" by the blue-coated metropolitans.

To use the expression common to both thieves and lawyers—no disrespect intended to either profession by bringing them in such close conjunction—in regard to the learned, dignified, and ponderous counselor, "What Lawyer Watt didn't know about the law wasn't worth knowing."

"Here's the counselor," the officer said, introducing him and then withdrawing.

"How are you, George?" said the lawyer, nodding familiarly to the imprisoned man and helping himself to the stool standing by the side of the bed.

Gentleman George and the lawyer were well acquainted, although this was the first time that the former had been in durance vile, and required the professional aid of the disciple of Coke and Blackstone, but he had employed the lawyer on behalf of friends of his who had fallen under the law's stern bar.

"Pretty well, considering," replied the prisoner.

"Well, they've got you at last," said Watt, caressing his fat chin in a thoughtful kind of way.

"Yes, I'm a caged bird now," George admitted, with a light laugh.

"It doesn't seem to trouble you much."

"No; why should it?"

"A weak case against you, eh?"

"No; on the contrary, a very strong case."

"Ah," and the lawyer looked wise. "What's the trouble?"

"Did you read the account of the robbery of the diamonds from the captain of the English liner, the Golden Dragon?"

"Yes—a v-e-r-y n-e-a-t job," replied the lawyer, slowly.

"If you remember the account published in the newspapers, after the thieves got away with the plunder, one of the harbor police-boats happened to come up and gave chase to the Rats, and just as the police got within range, one of the thieves put a bullet into the bow-oar of the police-boat, and in the confusion occasioned by that, the Rats managed to pull into the fog and get away."

"Yes, I remember all about it," the lawyer rejoined; "but how are you mixed up in the affair?"

"They say that I am the man who shot the policeman."

The counselor gave a low whistle of astonishment.

"Well, now, that is a serious charge," he remarked; "but, George, my boy, an accusation of that kind will be pretty hard to sustain."

"The government has got a pretty good witness," George suggested, quietly.

"Who?"

"The man who sat next to me in the boat and saw me fire the shot."

Counselor Watt looked astonished at this statement
"One of the fellows has given you away, then?"
"Just so."
"What reason?"
"None that I know of," George replied. "I suppose the police shadowed and pounced on him, and to save himself he 'squealed' on me."

"Pretty tough witness."
"We can get over him, though."
"Well, George, really I must be honest with you. It seems to me that the fellow's testimony will be hard to shake," the counselor was constrained to say.
"Suppose I bring two people who will swear that at the time this affray took place I was in a certain place with them?"

The lawyer shook his head doubtfully.
"My dear George, an *alibi* is the best thing in the world to clear a man, provided the witnesses can stand a rigid cross-examination; but if the evidence is no first-class it's a risky thing to try."

"My witnesses can stand it," George said, confidently.
"Ah, in that case it will do to work it." Then the lawyer stroked his chin thoughtfully for a few minutes. "The night was dark, I suppose?"

"Yes."
"None of the police could swear to you?"
"Not one of them."
"How are you off for money?"
"Five hundred to a thousand at command."
"I guess we can pull you through if we're lucky," the counselor announced, quite confidently. "This witness for the government is a pretty hard case, I suppose?"

"Mickey Shea; you know him."
"And Mickey has gone back on a friend, eh? Well, I wouldn't have believed it," and the Three-Decker shook his head, gravely.

"You know Mickey pretty well, don't you—you know how many times he has escaped Sing Sing?"

"Yes, I think I am posted," the counselor responded, with a knowing wink of his left eye.

"Don't you think you can use Mickey up on a cross-examination?"

"I think I can," Watt replied, after due deliberation. "After I get through with my esteemed friend, Mr. Shea, I think both Judge and Jury will be of the opinion that, to hang a 'yaller-dog' on his testimony would only be the grossest murder."

"The policeman is pretty badly hurt, but they say he is out of danger. I got a ball in the shoulder myself, in the affair."

"The deuce you did!" exclaimed the lawyer; "that will be an ugly point to get over."

"Not at all, I have thought of a way."

"George, you ought to go into the legal profession!" exclaimed the ponderous man of the courts, in admiration; "you are up to the dodges."

"Thank you; I am a big enough rogue now," the prison-bird replied, laughing.

The lawyer smiled good-naturedly.

"And now to return to our matters, our defense is a general denial."

"Exactly; and delay trial all you can. Mickey may be reached." There was a menace in the speech.

"All right," and the counselor rose as he spoke; "be careful, and don't do any thing rash; cover up your tracks well. I'll be in to-morrow, and we'll discuss the subject more fully."

And then the Three-Decker departed.

same man whom he had tended, so he thought he would come and see how you were. I met him on the steps outside and he recognized me at once. I told him that I would tell you he was here."

"I am glad he's come; I have been wishing for his skillful hand ever since I've been shut up in this cursed hole."

"I think he will do you good," the wife said, "although there is a mystery about him that I do not understand. He is a gentleman, I can tell that easily enough, and what his reason was for loitering about the low dens of Water and Cherry streets I can not guess."

"Oh, he may have got into some little trouble and found it convenient to keep shady for a while."

"I've sold the diamonds, George," the woman stated, abruptly.

"You have?" George looked surprised at this intelligence.

"Yes; I thought that you would need money, so I took the jewels out of the settings and disposed of them. I got eight hundred dollars for them."

"That's a pretty good price," George exclaimed. "The set cost two thousand, I believe, but I did not think that it would bring more than a quarter of that sum. These thieves of receivers never give more than a quarter of what any thing is worth."

"I went to old Moses and he would only give three hundred; I thought I could get more and so came away. Coming down Broadway I met Lewis Allen, the man that you used to be so intimate with. He stopped me and inquired about you, and I told him that you were in trouble. He said he had made a big stake and was going to Europe to enjoy himself for a short time; that he was sorry you were in difficulties, and asked if I wanted any money to see you through; said he was flush, and that he would willingly lend you five hundred or so. Then a bright idea came to me. I told him that I had diamonds worth from a thousand to fifteen hundred dollars, and that I would gladly sell them to him for eight hundred dollars, and that if he didn't want them himself he could easily dispose of them without risk over the water. He instantly said that was a bargain, gave me the money, and took the jewels."

"Hero, you're a trump!" George exclaimed, enthusiastically; "come here and give me a kiss, old girl."

The woman knelt by the side of the narrow bed and pressed her soft arm around Gentleman George. Her eyes were filled with tears—tears of happiness—as she felt the pressure of his lips upon her own.

She loved him with a devotion such as is rare in this life, and he, cold, callous heart, traded on that love, and cared only for the benefits it brought.

"Give me a hundred dollars, pet," he said, "and be sure and keep the rest safe. Come and see me every morning. I shall have to try the plan that you devised to get out of this scrape. My lawyer was here a few minutes ago and he seemed to think it would work."

"I am sure it will," Hero replied, in her quiet way; "they can not shake father's evidence, and he will testify good and strong for you. Now, I must go; good-by. I'll send the doctor up." She gave him the hundred dollars and rose to depart.

Again George kissed the pale lips, and then Hero left the cell. A few minutes after the prison officer conducted Neil Jemmison into the stone cage.

"How are you, doctor?" exclaimed George, offering his hand as the door closed behind the official. "They've got me in limbo, you see."

"Yes, I read an account of your arrest in the paper, and guessed my patient had fallen into the meshes of the law," the doctor answered. "And how is the wound?"

"You had better examine it, doctor."

George sat upon the edge of the bed, took off his vest and slipped the shirt down.

With a careful, skillful hand the visitor removed the bandage and examined the injury.

"The jaunt here hasn't helped it any, but it is all right. I brought a fresh supply of salve and bandages with me."

And then the doctor produced the articles from his coat pocket and proceeded to prepare them.

"I'm very much obliged to you, doctor," George said, gratefully; "few men would take such trouble for a stranger."

"Ah, but you don't seem like a stranger to me," Jemmison rejoined, thoughtfully. "I don't exactly understand it, but you seem like one that I have known, years ago."

"Years ago!" exclaimed George, in amazement. "Why, doctor, I should not take you to be many years older than I am, and I am hardly more than a boy."

"And I am almost old enough to be your father," Jemmison said, with a laugh, applying the fresh bandage to the wounded shoulder as he spoke.

"Indeed! How old are you, doctor?"

"Forty."

"And I am twenty-two."

"You see I was right in regard to our ages."

Then Jemmison adjusted the shirt over the bandage.

"And you think that you have met me before?"

"Yes; but when I say that, it hardly seems possible that I have really met you, but some one whom you resemble greatly—your father, perhaps."

Gentleman George laughed.

"My father and I were about as much alike as daylight and darkness. George Dominick, senior, the worthy locksmith of Forty-eighth street, was short and stout, his hair dark

CHAPTER XXIII.

A WIFE'S DEVOTION.

HARDLY had the ponderous form of the lawyer disappeared before the prison-officer stuck his head in at the cell door, and announced that another lady wished to see Gentleman George.

George anticipated who his visitor was.

"Show her up, please," he said; and then, as the official withdrew, he muttered: "She came within an ace of surprising the other one here; then there would have been a pretty kettle of fish; but a miss is as good as a mile."

George cast himself carelessly upon the bed, and waited for the lady to make her appearance; that it was his wife he had no doubt.

His guess was correct; it was Hero whom the officer conducted into the cell.

She looked as pale and careworn as usual, and waited until the officer departed before she spoke.

"Are you well, George?" she asked, her tone cold and calm, but there was a look in her eyes which fully betrayed how deep was the interest she felt.

"Oh, yes; as well as can be expected," he replied. "The wound in my shoulder still troubles me a little. By the by, Hero, do you think you could find that doctor for me—the one who extracted the ball I mean?"

"Yes, I know," she said; "he is down-stairs now."

"Indeed!" and Gentleman George looked astonished at this intelligence.

"Yes; he told me that he saw the account of your arrest in the *Times* this morning, and guessed instantly that it was the

and straight, his eyes black; not a bit of resemblance between us in any thing, looks or disposition."

"That is strange; perhaps you have an elder brother whom I have met?"

"No; I am an only child. I probably take my blue eyes and light hair from my mother. She died when I was only a child, and I don't remember much about her except that she was light in complexion."

"It is very strange that your face, voice, manner, all seem so familiar to me when, from what you have just told me, it is plainly impossible that I have ever met any of your kindred," the doctor admitted.

"It is rather queer. My father was an Englishman, without a single relative in this country; indeed, I am not sure that he had any in England either. I am inclined to think that he hadn't a relative in the world; at least, I never heard him speak of any."

"I suppose that it is one of those chance resemblances which we meet with sometimes," Jemmison suggested, rising to depart.

"Is it asking too much to say come again, doctor?"

"Oh, no; I'll drop in to-morrow. I shall not give you up now until the wound is entirely healed."

"If you would only allow me to pay you, doctor, for the service that you have rendered—"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Jemmison. "I am out of practice now—only an accident made me take charge of you; good-day." Then the olive-faced man retired, greatly puzzled.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A TRANSFORMATION.

IN Thirty-sixth street, near Fifth avenue, stood a twenty-foot front brown stone house; one of the kind that a graphic real-estate man would designate as "cosy" if the property was put into his hands, either to sell or rent.

And *cosy* indeed was the little brown-stone house, still more *cosy* inside than outwardly.

The door plate bore the name of Neil Jemmison.

And here it was that the "Doctor" had his home. Much the denizens of the East-side dens would have marveled could they have seen the abode of the man whom they had looked upon as being one of themselves, an outcast who had dared the power of the written law and feared its strong right arm.

The house was richly furnished from top to bottom. Two servants, an aged Englishman and his wife, took charge of the domicile.

"The master"—as old Mr. Burton and his fat and buxom wife termed Neil Jemmison—was away from home a great deal. His coming and going were alike erratic. No warning of the one, no preparation for the other.

The "master's" favorite resort when home was the library, which was the front room over the parlor on the second floor. The back room was his bed-chamber.

The library was sumptuously fitted up, and the cases which adorned the walls contained an excellent selection of books. One particular case was filled with medical works, proving that, although Jemmison did not pursue his profession, he still had not lost his interest in the study of his early days; and if the medical works were not proof enough of that, the elegantly mounted human skeleton which stood on a pedestal between two of the book-cases perhaps would have convinced a doubter.

On the center-table the current magazines were carelessly strewn; the medical ones including the leading English and Continental publications.

Every morning at eight o'clock precisely Mr. Burton served the breakfast, then touched the cord which rung the bell in the master's chamber.

And if Mr. Jemmison did not make his appearance in the dining-room within fifteen minutes, Mr. Burton understood that he was not at home, and he would then summon his wife and they would sit down to enjoy the repast.

The same mode of proceeding was gone through with at dinner and supper.

Five years had the aged couple resided with Mr. Jemmison, and, naturally, by this time they had become pretty well accustomed to his ways.

Great was the astonishment of the worthy couple when Mr. Jemmison descended to breakfast one morning, after having been absent for four or five days, accompanied by a wild-looking young woman, or girl rather, who rejoiced in a great profusion of fiery red hair.

The old gentleman, who always attended to the table, was so amazed that he gazed at the girl with open mouth, much to that young lady's anger, and only the presence of her benefactor prevented her giving the wonder-struck Mr. Burton "a piece of her mind," to use the common expression.

The rags in which the girl was clothed did not tend to decrease the astonishment of the worthy steward.

The master had seated the child at the table as politely as though she had been a princess and the heir to a throne. Then had told Burton to place the breakfast upon the table, and further informed him, after that was done, that he need not wait.

Burton understood at once that his services were dispensed

with at the breakfast table in order that the new-comer might be more at her ease.

After placing the various dishes upon the table he withdrew to acquaint his wife with the wonderful circumstance. And much the worthy couple wondered at the strange addition to the Jemmison household.

Five years had the two resided with Mr. Jemmison, and in all that time they had never heard the master mention aught concerning any relatives, and long ago they had come to the deliberate conclusion that he had neither kith nor kin in the world. Sure, therefore, were both husband and wife that the red-headed girl in the ragged clothes was no relative of Mr. Neil Jemmison, and in due course of time they came to the opinion that the bright-eyed, defiant-looking child was some waif whom the master had found in his mysterious rambles.

The worthy couple's amazement was still further increased when, after breakfast was over, Mr. Jemmison summoned Burton to his library and informed him that, in the future, the young lady—Miss Mary, as he termed her—would make one of the family, and that he wished Mrs. Burton to send out instantly and procure suitable clothing for her, and, if all necessary articles could not be procured ready-made, to employ a seamstress and have the girl's wardrobe made up. And he also desired Mr. Burton to procure a young girl to act in the capacity of lady's maid to "Miss Mary."

The steward proceeded to execute the orders at once.

The clothes were procured, boots, hats and all the little etc., which go to make up a young lady's outfit at the present day.

The lady's maid was also secured—a trim little Irish girl, Bridget Healy by name.

The ragged girl had been wonderfully improved in looks, long before the lady's maid arrived. The kinky hair, fiery red in hue, had first been carefully washed and then as carefully oiled and arranged by Mrs. Burton's skillful fingers, and the result was that the fiery hue was subdued and changed into a sort of golden tint.

Attired in a neat house-dress of calico—the master had given strict orders that Miss Mary's wardrobe should be entirely plain and that no "finery" should be purchased—the dress reaching to her ankles, the girl looked more like what she really was, more of a woman than a child.

Mrs. Burton was quite delighted when she had finished her task and surveyed the result.

Molly Bawn, neatly dressed, with her glossy bright hair, and her wondrous complexion, so clear red and white, peculiar to the blonde daughters of Erin's green isle, looked really pretty.

And so Mrs. Burton told her husband, when she joined him in the regions below, and added that it was her belief that the master had wonderful taste to discover the girl's beauty beneath its uncouth covering.

And Molly Bawn, child of the streets and heiress of the gutters, accepted all the attentions offered to her with a face as grave and a manner as self-possessed as if a luxurious bath, a skillful hair-dresser, and linen fit for a princess, were to her but as common things.

Gravely and quietly she submitted to be washed and dressed, to have the comb force its way through the tangled curls, and never even made a remark in regard to the novel operations.

Mrs. Burton wondered at first, for the good old lady was inclined to be talkative; and though she had been warned not to question her charge, yet she could not help trying to enter into conversation with her.

But the girl merely answered "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am;" and as conversation was tedious when confined almost entirely to one person, Mrs. Burton at last gave up the attempt; and when she went down-stairs, conveyed to her husband her belief that the new young lady was really the strangest girl she had ever seen, and she did not wonder that, being an oddity himself, Mr. Jemmison had taken a liking to her.

By the time the lady's maid arrived, Molly had fully mastered the situation, and apparently felt as much at home in her new clothes as though she had been used to neat and becoming apparel since the day she had come into the world.

In truth, Molly was old beyond her years. The life of the streets sharpens the wits, and if it does not kill the subject, "forces" it onward as the hot-house does a foreign plant. Molly, a child of sixteen, knew as much as nine-tenths of the young ladies of twenty-two.

CHAPTER XXV.

MOLLY'S FATHER.

JUST four days had Molly Bawn enjoyed the hospitalities of the Jemmison mansion.

The master had met her at the table each day, but had not seen her else, as after the meal was finished, he always retired to the sanctity of his library, and the girl went to her own chamber. The front bedroom on the third floor had been assigned to her.

After breakfast on the morning of the fifth day, Jemmison had asked the girl if she would like to look at his library, and she, eagerly catching at the opportunity to enjoy the society

of her benefactor, had quickly replied that she would like to see the library.

So Jemmison conducted Molly into the "sanctum" that was sacred to him alone, for rarely did any other foot than his tread upon the green carpet of the library floor.

The girl looked around her in wonder, stared at the skeleton, but did not manifest the slightest sign of fear.

"You are not afraid, Molly?" he asked.

"Not a mite! I've seen too much wickedness alive to be afeard of dead bones. Mebbe I might be skeer'd if I came in here in the night, and didn't know that it was here."

Jemmison laughed. He sat down in his accustomed seat, a huge arm-chair, and pushed another one toward the girl.

"Sit down, Molly," he said, "and tell me how you like your new home."

The girl obeyed, but a peculiar look passed over her face as she pondered over the question.

Jemmison guessed pretty accurately what thoughts were in her mind, and smiled as he noticed her hesitation.

"Don't be afraid, Molly; speak out," he said, reassuringly.

"And you won't be angry or nothing if I say what I think?" Molly inquired, anxiously.

"No, of course not," he replied. "Tell me exactly how you like living here with me."

"Well, it's awful slow," she said, hesitatingly, and with a look of apprehension upon her face, lest by her plain speaking she should offend the gentleman who had so kindly rescued her from the misery of the street.

"The wild life that you formerly led is more agreeable to you, then, than dwelling here in quiet with me?"

"No, it ain't that," Molly answered, quietly; "but I'm lonesome here; I ain't got anybody to talk to."

"Why, there is the young girl that waits on you," he urged.

"She's nice enough, I s'pose," Molly explained; "but I can't talk to her. She thinks that I'm a regular lady, calls me Miss Mary, and is awful anxious to wait on me; and if I was to try and talk to her, she'd find out quick enough that I'm only a make-believe lady, and not the genuine article, and no mistake."

"So, to keep up your character, you are obliged to hold your tongue?" Jemmison asked, laughing.

"You bet!" replied Molly, quite emphatically.

"Well, is there any thing you can suggest in order that I may remedy the difficulty, and make your stay here more agreeable?" he inquired.

"I guess there is," was the hesitating response.

"Let us hear your ideas on the subject."

"Send Bridget away; I don't want her, and let me wait on myself. I allers want to call her Biddy, too. I don't like her, 'cos she's a paddy-whack, and the Mulcarthys, who used to beat me, were paddy-whacks too, and I jest hate 'em—that's what I do."

Molly's flashing eyes and earnest face fully revealed how earnest she was.

"You want Bridget to go away, then?"

"Yes; and I want you to give me something to do. I don't care what it is. Let me sweep down the stairs, or any thing like that; I can do it just as nice as anybody; or let me make the beds and take care of the rooms. I can do it, I know."

"You would rather work than play lady, eh?" and a peculiar smile was upon Neil's dark face.

"Yes, a heap sight!" returned the girl, promptly.

"All right; you shall have your wish. Now we will arrange the programme. Breakfast at eight; at nine an hour to make your room tidy, and to clean up this room. At ten, school."

"School?" Molly's face grew blank.

"Yes; does not that idea please you?"

"I can read and almost write," the street child said; "I can write a little. I learned with a piece of charcoal on a cellar-door, and on the coal-box, at the corner."

"Do you know where Paris is?"

"It's way off somewhere; 'tain't here," was Molly's dubious reply.

"You must go to school to learn where Paris is. This shall be your school-room and I will be your teacher."

Molly's face brightened up wonderfully.

"That will be hunkey!" she exclaimed, delighted at the idea. "I'll learn quick; see if I don't."

Jemmison smiled at the girl's enthusiasm.

"We won't send Bridget away; we can find enough for her to do."

"She's good enough, I s'pose," Molly confessed, "but I ain't used to be waited on; and she's so slow, too. Why, it don't take me five minutes to get my clothes on. I say, Mr. Jemmison, you are taking a heap of trouble with me," the girl exclaimed very abruptly. "Are you my father?"

"Why, what put that idea in your head?" he demanded, in surprise.

"Well, I don't know," Molly replied, thoughtfully. "I thought that, mebbe, you were my father, that night when you offered to take me home with you. I heard you inquiring about a woman and a child from one of the rounders, down on Cherry street, and I thought that p'haps, I was the child. And I kinder cottoned to you as if you were my father, any-way."

It made Neil Jemmison young again to listen to the earnest words of the girl; the story of the slums sounded so strange, coming from the fresh young lips of the child.

"And you have got the idea into your head that I am your father?"

"Yes: 'cos if you wasn't, you wouldn't take me to this grand house and have servants to wait on me, jest as if I was a queen, or something of that sort," Molly replied earnestly, and she fixed her bright eyes inquiringly on the grave face of the master as she spoke.

"Do you not remember anything of your parents?"

She shook her head.

"Did not the folks with whom you lived ever speak of your parents?"

"No; only they used to call me a begger's brat when they got mad at me."

"You are sure that they were not your parents?"

"Oh, yes," replied the girl, quickly. "I heard Mrs. Mulcarthy say a dozen times that I was no chick of their breed, and that they only kept me out of charity. Ever since I was big enough to understand anything about it, I've been on the look-out for my father or mother to come and take me away. And the very first time I saw you talking to one of the rounders outside of Patsey Doolin's place, I heard you say something 'bout a woman and a child, and I jest made up my mind that I was the chick that you was after."

Jemmison silently rose from his chair, took the girl by the shoulders, and led her up to the large glass which occupied the wall between the two front windows.

"Look!" he commanded, directing Molly's attention to the two faces mirrored in the glass.

"Yes, I see."

"Is there any resemblance between my oval, olive face, dark eyes, dark hair, and your red-gold locks, blue eyes, slender face, and clear red and white complexion?"

"Not much."

"Would you take that girl to be the daughter of this man?" he demanded.

"Girls don't always look like their fathers," Molly averred, stoutly. It was apparent that the girl did not relish giving up the father theory.

Jemmison laughed, as he said:

"You are determined that I shall be your father in spite of myself."

"I don't believe that I can get any better father, and I guess I'll hold on to you," Molly declared, in a tone that Jemmison understood. The girl was firm in her belief.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JEMMISON ON THE SCENT.

SATURDAY evening at half-past seven; the crowd besieging the box-office at Niblo's Garden plainly indicated that there would be an excellent audience present that night to receive the charming Miss Ellen Desmond.

The manager as usual was hovering about the entrance, and the indefatigable Mr. Medham, posted by the ticket-taker, was mentally calculating how much money there would be in the "house" that night.

By one of those lucky chances which sometimes occur in this life, Neil Jemmison, passing into the theater, came face to face with the manager, and the thought occurred that from that jovial personage he might learn something respecting the woman whose face had produced such an effect upon him. Possibly if Jemmison had not been brought face to face with the manager, he would never have thought of cross-examining him.

"How do you do?" said Jemmison, halting, and extending his hand.

"Glad to see you!" exclaimed the manager, almost at the same time, and then he shook Jemmison's hand cordially.

"How is business with you?"

"Oh, excellent; look at them coming in!"

"Miss Desmond is attractive then?"

"Oh, yes; she has been doing splendidly."

"So I judged; I have attended three or four times myself."

"Yes; I saw you the other night."

"By the way, where does Miss Desmond come from?" Jemmison asked, carelessly. "Is she an English actress?"

"Oh, no, American; she has been playing in the West for some time—three or four years, I believe."

"I do not remember ever hearing of her before," Jemmison remarked.

"She made no reputation to speak of; this engagement is really the beginning of her career. But, how do you like her?"

"Very well, indeed."

"She is very pretty."

"Yes, magnificent hair."

"Perfectly splendid!" responded the manager.

"Very long, too, and so very black."

"Black!" cried the worthy manager, in astonishment.

"Yes; black of course."

"But her hair isn't black!"

"No?" Jemmison assumed to be surprised; "why, it looks black from the front of the house. It's a dark brown then, I presume."

"Neither black nor brown; it's a most beautiful gold-color—a tawny yellow."

Now Jemmison was really surprised.

"She has light hair?"

"Yes, she wears a wig in this piece."

Jemmison had noticed the yellow hair when the actress had passed him in front of the *Maison Doree*, but at once had come to the conclusion that it was not her own.

"I did not think of that," Jemmison confessed.

"Most beautiful golden hair!" the manager repeated.

During this conversation the two had withdrawn to one side so as to get out of the way of the human life-current that was streaming into the theater.

"In fact," continued the manager, "she is about as pretty a woman as I have seen in a long while. That's one reason why she draws, you know; there's nothing like beauty and talent combined. It was just an accident that I happened to get her here. I was going to do a new show-piece and found out that I couldn't get it ready in time. I had about two weeks open, and nothing that was sure to draw to put in. I had considerable correspondence with this lady's business manager, a Mr. Medham—deuced smart fellow, by the way; knows what the people want—and had made up my mind to give the lady a trial on the first favorable opportunity, so I engaged her for the two weeks, but I think that she is safe to play six or eight."

When the manager spoke of the actress' business agent the idea flashed at once into Jemmison's head that possibly from her own business manager he could procure the information he wished.

"Medham," Jemmison said, reflectively; "that name sounds familiar to me. Is he one of our New York men?"

"No, I think not; he's been around New York a great deal though. He's a theatrical speculator."

"Probably I know him; the name is very familiar."

"There he is now."

The manager pointed out Medham, who, standing by the door-tender, caressing his fat chin, seemed the very picture of happiness. The steady inflow of paying patrons delighted the soul of the lady's business-manager.

Jemmison took a good look at Mr. Medham, then shook his head.

"No, I was wrong; I don't know him," he had to confess.

"Shall I call him over and introduce you?" the manager asked. "If you feel at all curious about Miss Desmond he can tell you all about her. He discovered her somewhere out West playing in some little traveling company, I believe. In fact he has made her what she is. Her talent wouldn't amount to much without his advertising skill to make it known. He's smart as a steel-trap—a regular Massachusetts Yankee."

"Yes; I really think I should like to know him," Jemmison replied.

Just at that moment the manager happened to catch Medham's eye and beckoned for him.

When Medham approached, the manager introduced him to Jemmison, and then, begging to be excused, withdrew to his private office.

"Likely to be a large audience in attendance this evening," Neil remarked.

Rubbing his hands together briskly, Medham replied, with an air of intense satisfaction, that the audience promised to be the largest of the week.

Then Jemmison came at once to the subject which formed the attraction of the audience, the young and pretty actress.

Medham was in no way averse to conversing about her, but his conversation only tended to her talents as an actress—the great success she was meeting with, and how worthy she was of such triumphs.

Jemmison, keen and subtle student of human nature, perceived, after about five minutes' conversation, that the business manager was no fool, and that he was not to be put through the process of "pumping" with impunity.

Of Miss Ellen Desmond the actress he spoke freely and frankly, but of Miss Desmond off the stage and in private life he was strangely reserved.

Jemmison quickly comprehended that to gain the information he wanted, he must pursue some other plan than to attempt to extract it from the shrewd business-manager by any series of deftly-put questions. So, deciding upon a plan of operations, he proceeded to carry it out.

When the curtain rose, Jemmison and Medham in company repaired to the auditorium. The eyes of the business-manager sparkled with delight as he gazed upon the well-filled house.

Together the two watched the progress of the play; together, between the acts, they sought the saloon of the Metropolitan Hotel, where Jemmison ordered a bottle of champagne, much to Medham's astonishment, who at once set his new-made acquaintance down as being a "full-blooded white man."

Jemmison insisted upon paying for every thing, and at the end of the fourth act it was with regret that Medham felt obliged to excuse himself to Jemmison and explain that he had to visit the box office to "count up the house," and thereby ascertain how much money was due to Miss Desmond as her share of the proceeds of the night.

Jemmison simply asked how soon he would be at liberty, and, on Medham replying that it would only take thirty minutes or so, said that he would wait for him, and suggested that as they had commenced they might as well make a night of it, to which the business-manager gravely assented.

It was not often that Mr. Almer Medham ran across an acquaintance who insisted upon standing champagne of the best brands at every "round."

Medham generally rode home with the actress, but he knew how he could arrange that matter.

Jemmison smiled grimly to himself as he reflected that soon the secret would be revealed to him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"WINE WORKS WONDERS."

Just a minute or two before the curtain descended, thereby indicating that the play had ended, Medham came forth from the box-office and rejoined Jemmison.

"It will be over in a minute or so," the business-manager said, referring to the play. "Just wait for me in the saloon. I shall have to explain to Miss Desmond that I have an engagement. I usually escort her home. It won't detain me over ten minutes."

"Don't hurry yourself on my account," Jemmison remarked; "I'll wait."

Then Medham proceeded at once to the stage-door, leaving Jemmison to witness the closing scene of the play.

Finally the curtain descended, and Medham, encountering the tired actress at the "wing," escorted her to her dressing-room.

"A splendid house," she said, as she sunk down, exhausted, in a chair, while the burly negress proceeded to remove the raven-hued wig.

"Yes, a little over fifteen hundred dollars!" Medham exclaimed, jubilantly.

"And how much for the week?"

"Forty-five hundred and sixty-three dollars."

"And we share after three thousand."

"Yes, our share is fifteen hundred and thirty-one dollars and fifty cents."

"That is something like a share!" Miss Desmond exclaimed, exultingly.

"I bet ye!" the business-manager replied, tersely; "a little different from the one-horse towns that we used to figure in, where we were lucky if we got enough to pay our board and printing bill and fare to the next town."

"What is our expense for the week?"

"Only about three hundred dollars; it only cost about two-fifty to advertise, and I think I did the thing up brown, too." With great satisfaction Mr. Medham indulged in this observation.

"We have made six hundred apiece, then, by the week," the actress said, thoughtfully.

"Quite correct!" Medham replied. "A very tidy little sum; and Zimmerman—he's the treasurer, you know—told me when we settled up to-night that he felt confident we would do fully as well, if not better, next week."

"Why, if this business continues we shall make a small fortune out of this engagement!" the actress exclaimed, and there was a strange sparkle and gleam in her eyes as she spoke.

"Oh, yes; but, my dear, I am sorry to say that there is only one New York in this country; still, after this triumph we shall be able to demand better terms from the Western managers, and perhaps pick up a few ducats out there in the fall. If we can get Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans, Baltimore and Pittsburg, we are pretty safe for about three thousand dollars; the rest of the towns don't amount to much for us."

"Oh, yes, if our business only holds here. Boston and Philadelphia, too, will be good for us if we can get time at the right theaters. A New York success sweeps the country." The business-manager felt extremely jubilant. Never before in his career had he carried off fifteen hundred dollars from the box-office on a Saturday night.

"Here's the six hundred for you, Nelly," he continued, drawing a huge roll of bills from his pocket and placing it on the dressing-place before the woman. "I want you to excuse me from seeing you home to-night. I want to go off and celebrate after the week's brilliant success."

"Very well; just as you please," Miss Desmond said, carelessly. "Did you notice that Mr. Bruyn was in the box again to-night?"

"Yes; I saw the Judge when he came in. By the way, he asked me to inform you that he should be pleased to call upon you if it was agreeable."

The eyes of the actress snapped, and the little white teeth came together for a moment with a savage clink as the points met. The look upon the face of the woman was a strange combination of rage and triumph blended. It was a minute or so before she spoke.

"Well," she said, at length, "I suppose that there is no harm in my receiving the gentleman."

"Not the slightest!" Medham exclaimed, abruptly. "I tell you what it is, Nell, you've got the Judge foul. If you have a mind to play for it, you can win a position that will make half of old Bruyn's female friends turn pale with envy. The Judge is in dead earnest. He's no light-headed fool like these young dandies who sit in the front seats and try to attract your attention by flinging bouquets at you. I tell you what, Nell, to marry the Judge would be the biggest kind of a star engagement."

"And do you really think that he would marry me?" the actress demanded, seriously.

"Why not? He's evidently 'struck' by you, to use the common term."

"But he is very rich, they say."

"What of that?" exclaimed Medham, contemptuously; "he'll not be the first man to charm a pretty woman by the offer of a golden cage. 'Go for him, Nelly! From what I have seen of the Judge, and from the way he speaks of you, I'll bet ten to one that you catch him!'"

"Well, I'll see," she said, with evident thoughtfulness.

"By, by; I'm off. If I happen to meet the Judge, I'll bring him up, to-morrow afternoon." And then Medham withdrew and hastened to the saloon, where he had promised to meet Jemmison.

The business-manager had discovered that gentleman smoking at the door on Broadway.

After Medham had apologized to Jemmison for keeping him waiting so long, and Jemmison had begged him not to mention it, Medham suggested some champagne to commence on, to which Jemmison had replied that he had already ordered supper in the adjoining restaurant, and that the champagne was in the ice.

At this announcement, Medham came at once to the conclusion that the dark-eyed stranger was a prince in disguise, and then he suddenly remembered what the manager had told him about Jemmison being the heir to a gold-mine, and ceased to wonder at his liberality.

To the restaurant the two adjourned, and soon the supper was placed upon the table.

A thorough judge of the good things of this world Jemmison had taxed to their utmost the resources of the establishment. And Medham, who, during his checkered career had trodden every round of the ladder of fortune from the foot to the top, had fully learned to appreciate the delicacies of the table, devoured the viands with great gusto. The wine, too, was excellent, and by the time supper was eaten, the two had got to the second bottle, and Medham felt supremely contented with himself and all the world.

Jemmison while playing the part of a courteous host still kept a wary eye upon his guest, and at length cautiously broached the subject.

"I have been very much pleased with Miss Desmond," he said, carelessly, after he had listened to Medham's praise of the lady's talent; "and her face seems so familiar to me that I feel sure I have met her before."

"Seen her act somewhere, perhaps," suggested Medham.

"No; I have never seen her act; I am sure of that; but I think I used to know her before she went on the stage, say some sixteen or eighteen years ago," Jemmison said.

"She's only eighteen now, you know," Medham observed with a sly wink, filling up his glass as he spoke.

"To the public; yes, I understand all about that. But if my idea is correct, she is about thirty-six or thirty-eight years old."

"I don't really think she is as old as that, although she's no chicken," Medham remarked; "of course I shouldn't say this to every one."

"But is her name Desmond?"

"Yes, I think it is," Medham responded; "at least I never knew her by any other name, and if it isn't her right name she knows enough to keep that shady. I can tell you all I know of her, in about a minute. I was out West as agent for a dramatic company playing in the small Ohio towns, and this Miss Desmond came from Cincinnati to join us, sent by a dramatic agent there. I saw that the girl had stuff in her, though she only came to play small parts. So I proposed to her to go starring with me. I had a stake of about a thousand dollars that I was willing to risk. She jumped at the offer and so we started. As to her past life, what she had been before she went on the stage, I know no more than the man in the moon. And, now I think of it, it is rather strange considering how intimate we have been, that I have never heard her mention a single word of her past life."

The trail had ended—no thoroughfare beyond!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE JUDGE CROSS-EXAMINES.

AT ten o'clock on Sunday morning, Mr. Medham opened his eyes and suddenly became conscious that he had a terrible head-ache.

"Confound that champagne!" he muttered, as he got up and proceeded to bathe his head. "I ought to have stuck to whisky, my native beverage, and let the sparkling fluid alone."

Then Medham dressed himself and proceeded down-stairs for breakfast. After the meal was dispatched, he went to the reading-room which looked out upon Broadway, and seating himself in an easy-chair, proceeded to look over the newspapers.

An hour or so Medham glanced over the various journals; then Judge Bruyn entered the room, and interrupted his solitary meditations. As the Judge advanced at once to Medham, he naturally guessed that the Judge had been seeking him.

"Good-morning," the Judge said, seating himself by Medham's side; "how do you find yourself this morning?"

Medham replied that he was in tolerable health, and expressed the hope that the Judge was the same, to which of course the Judge made suitable answer.

Then Bruyn picked up one of the papers that Medham had carelessly dropped and glanced at a head-line.

"Gentleman George," he said, repeating the substance of the boldly displayed line of type; "an odd name for a rascal, isn't it?" And as the Judge spoke, he watched the face of the business-manager narrowly, but Mr. Medham wore his usual placid smile in blissful unconsciousness of the Judge's search for information.

"Oh, they give those fellows all sorts of fancy names," Medham said. "I remember one fellow in California—a sporting gent who 'gambled on the green'—who was usually called 'The Panther,' yet he seemed to be just as nice and well-mannered a gentleman as one would wish to see. Who is this Gentleman George?"

"One of those clever rascals for whom the law is always reaching, but whom, somehow, it never manages to touch. He's in the Tombs now, on a charge of assault with intent to kill."

"Oh, yes," Medham exclaimed, abruptly, "I believe that I did read something about him in one of the newspapers last week. Shot a man on the river, didn't he?"

"Yes; I think that is the offense he is charged with."

"I suppose he'll get off if he has plenty of money; from the way things have been going lately, it has struck me that a man with plenty of money can do almost anything in New York and not be troubled much for it either."

"It does look like it, sometimes," Bruyn said. He was fully satisfied now that Mr. Almer Medham knew nothing of Gentleman George, but the fact of the actress visiting the prisoner in his cell was still an unsolved mystery to him. When he reflected upon the circumstance he saw how probable it was that Miss Desmond might be acquainted with Gentleman George and Medham still be ignorant of the fact.

"How is Miss Desmond, to-day?" the Judge asked, after a little pause.

"I really don't know; I have not seen her this morning. Naturally, though, I suppose she must feel a little tired after her week's work. I shall call upon her, about three this afternoon. If you have no engagement, Judge, I should like to have you call upon Miss Desmond. I know that she will be delighted to see you," Medham added, in his careless, good-natured way.

"I am at liberty this afternoon, as it happens," Bruyn said; "and if you have nothing better to do between now and three, take a drive with me through the Park."

Medham accepted the invitation at once. Bruyn's team was outside, and the two getting in, drove out to High Bridge; there they alighted, had a lunch, and then returned to the city.

And after they had got fairly started on the trip, Bruyn, by a series of skillfully-put questions, endeavored to draw from his companion all that he knew in regard to Miss Desmond.

But Medham, careless and off-handed as he appeared to be, was not the man to be "pumped," even by so able a lawyer as the Judge. Besides, he reasoned in his own mind that there was a wide difference between Judge Bruyn and Neil Jemmison—and he might also have added with truth, between Almer Medham at midnight with two bottles of champagne under his jacket, and the same gentleman at noon with a slight head-ache and perfectly innocent of sense-bewildering drink. To Jemmison he had frankly revealed all he knew concerning the actress, even his own opinion regarding her age, but to the Judge he was as dumb as an oyster.

And innocent and artless Mr. Medham never betrayed by a word or look that he was perfectly conscious he was undergoing the legal operation known as a cross-examination.

The Judge, able and skillful as he certainly was, had his labor for his pains, and therefore alighted at the door of Miss Desmond's house no wiser in regard to her than when, three hours before, he had driven with Medham up Broadway.

Miss Desmond, dressed as usual very plainly, but in such becoming garments that they seemed to enhance her beauty, received the Judge with a blush and a smile. Gracefully and charmingly she begged his pardon for receiving him in house attire, but added in her innocent, child-like way that she had no visitors except Mr. Medham, and he was used to her simple dress.

The Judge, old, cautious man of the world as he was, well versed in all the tricks of humanity, was caught by the frank simplicity of the actress. She possessed far more natural abilities in the acting line than he gave her credit for, and she did not always need the stage of the theater to display them.

Bruyn never thought of the trite adage that a woman is never so dangerous as when she seems to be most helpless.

After a few minutes' conversation upon the common subjects of the weather, Miss Desmond's success, and the prospects for the future, Mr. Medham begged to be excused for twenty or thirty minutes, as he had some business letters to write in reference to Miss Desmond's future engagements, and asked the lady's permission to use her pen and ink and turn the dining-room into an office.

Miss Desmond smilingly gave the desired permission, and called to the negress to get Mr. Medham what he wanted.

After Medham withdrew, promising as he did so that he would not be long, the Judge noticed a Sunday newspaper lying upon the table, and as he gazed at it, again the bold head-line, "Gentleman George!" caught his eye.

Carelessly he picked the paper up and read the name aloud, and as he did so, closely watched the face of the actress. Not a muscle moved. The face calm and white, might have

been carved out of marble for all the emotion that it betrayed when the felon's name was pronounced.

"A strange name, Miss Desmond," the Judge remarked.

"Yes, very strange," she returned, and as she spoke she darted a quick glance at the Judge from her long dark eyelashes—so quick that even the sharp eyes of Bruyn did not detect it.

"Have you read the particulars of the case?" he asked; and, despite his effort to appear careless and unconcerned, the legal sharpness of the lawyer was plainly apparent.

Again came the short, quick glance from under the long, dark lashes. The man skilled in the law was no match for the sharp-eyed woman of the world. His face betrayed the secret that hers preserved.

"Yes, I am quite interested in his case—to use your legal term," she replied. Her face as calm and her voice as firm as if it was the most natural thing in the world for her to be interested in the career of a society brigand.

The Judge's face fully revealed the astonishment that he felt at this candid confession.

"I really cannot understand why you should take any interest in the life or death of any such fellow as this Dominick," he said.

"Why, I know him," she answered, innocently.

"You do?"

"Yes, I became acquainted with him about a year ago. He stopped at the same hotel that I did. It was in a little town out west. He seemed to be very much of a gentleman and helped me a great deal; I was just struggling along then. He said that he was connected with the New York press and promised to aid me to get an engagement here. Then he went away suddenly and I never saw or heard of him again until I received a letter, telling me that he was in the Tombs and asking me to visit him."

"And did you go?" The Judge put the question admirably, considering that he knew that she had gone.

"Yes; he wished me to assist him if I could do so, and said that his arrest was all a scheme of some personal enemies, to ruin him."

"Don't you believe it, Miss Desmond!" exclaimed the Judge, decidedly. "He is a thorough scoundrel, I know it as a fact."

"In that case, then, I will not take any more notice of him," the actress said, quite promptly.

The Judge smiled; he imagined that he had "made his game."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL.

IN just two weeks from the day of Gentleman George's arrest his trial came. His lawyer, the ponderous Three-Decker, had vainly tried to stave off the trial, but the officers of the law, urged on by a healthy public sentiment manifested by the newspaper clamor for justice, pressed the case to an early hearing, and so Gentleman George was produced in open court to answer to the law that he had outraged.

The doctor who attended to the wounded policeman, struck down by the ball of the river plunderers, testified as to the nature of the hurt that the officer had received, and stated, too, that even now the recovery of the man was a matter of doubt; that the chances for life were fully even with the chances for death. Then the policemen who were with the wounded man in the boat were placed upon the stand, one by one, and testified as to the manner in which the wounded man had received his hurt. So far this was the usual course and routine of the legal machinery, and implicated no one as being the author of the outrage. Then Mickey Shea took the stand and told a plain, straightforward story as to the work of the night when the rats of the river had relieved the British captain of the Golden Dragon of his diamond charge. He told how he had been enticed into joining the river thieves by the prisoner at the bar, Gentleman George, as he was nicknamed, or George Dominick, as he should be called; how in a moment of weakness, he had yielded to the temptation and had joined Dominick and his companions in their raid upon the Liverpool liner. He then described embarking in a boat at the foot of Market street with the masked men—how they had given him a mask, and he had placed it over his face in obedience to their instructions. Then they had pulled out into the stream and headed straight for the vessel swinging at its anchors off the Battery. Plainly and tersely Mickey related how they had ascended the side of the ship, and, descending into the cabin, had robbed the Briton of the diamond jewelry intrusted to his care. After that, descending to their boat again, Mickey and his companions had pulled off quite leisurely, until the police-boat had given chase; then he described how Dominick, the leader of the party, finding that the police-boat was gaining upon them, had deliberately leveled his revolver at the officers, and fired; and further testified that he had heard a groan come from the police-boat and had seen one of the officers drop his oar and fall, evidently wounded by the pistol-shot of Dominick.

Mickey's evidence was direct and delivered without hesitation. It would have been much more likely to carry conviction if he had been a better looking man, but the contrast between the witness in the box swearing a man's life away, and the

prisoner at the bar, with the prospect of ten or twenty years in the State Prison before him, was great indeed.

Mickey Shea, a red-faced, bullet-headed fellow, with evil eyes, and the impress of the rough and shoulder-hitter stamped indelibly upon him, was just the opposite of George Dominick—Gentleman George—with his pale, delicate face and gentlemanly bearing; the contrast rendered still more marked by the unusual pallor of George's face, caused by the suffering and loss of blood entailed by his wound.

And near the prisoner, too, sat his wife, pale and evidently deeply agitated. This was a device of the astute Three-Decker, who fully understood what effect the pale and anxious face of a pretty woman would have upon the tender susceptibilities of an average juryman.

Mickey's evidence closed the first day's proceedings.

Vainly Counselor Watt had pleaded that the case might be put off until Captain Drummond, the commander of the Golden Dragon, could be summoned from Europe to give his evidence in the case, but the Judge, rightly understanding it was for the purpose of gaining time alone that the motion had been made, quietly denied it, and decided that the trial must go on.

Just a single glance the Three-Decker cast around the court, but in the glance he fully expressed the opinion that there was no justice for his client in that court; then he sat down and gathered up his papers, apparently in deep despair. This was all done for effect, of course.

Among the spectators in the court-room was Nicholas Bruyn. It was not often that the ex-judge troubled himself to attend a criminal trial unless he was personally concerned in it, but he felt a strange curiosity to see the desperado who had been honored with the friendship of the pretty Miss Desmond.

Bruyn was considerably astonished at the appearance of the prisoner, and what still more astonished him, as he got a good look at the pale and handsome face of Gentleman George, was the impression which took possession of him, that at some previous time he had seen a face which resembled the face of the man in the prisoner's dock with an almost life-long imprisonment staring him in the face.

The more Nicholas Bruyn looked at the prisoner the more he became convinced that somewhere he had seen the face before.

And then the ex-Judge went back over his past life and tried to remember when and where he had met Gentleman George. But the effort was a failure, and Bruyn possessed a wonderful memory, too—a fact that many a criminal had cause to remember when Nicholas Bruyn had sat in judgment.

"I am sure that I have met this fellow somewhere," the Judge muttered, impatiently, amazed that he could not "place" the face. "But where?—that is the rub. I wonder if he has ever been through my hands? It is not often that a face escapes me, and I am *sure* I have seen this one before; the eyes and hair, the peculiar shape of the face; oh, no! there is no mistake. I have met this gentleman, but hang me if I can remember the circumstances."

Then the Judge suddenly remembered that during his political career he had been obliged for a brief period to associate with some very peculiar people, for politics, like misery, makes strange bed-fellows, and the thought occurred that, possibly at some caucus or primary election of the untrified, he had encountered Gentleman George.

With this solution the Judge was fain to be satisfied. He remained throughout the trial, for he had taken quite an interest in the proceedings, and when he thought of Ellen Desmond, the actress, in connection with the man on trial for a deadly assault, he came quickly to the conclusion that it was as well that the handsome face and form of Gentleman George should adorn the corridors and workshops of Sing Sing Prison.

The Judge fully understood the interest that a face like George Dominick's would naturally excite in a susceptible female heart, and really was afraid that the society brigand would prove a dangerous rival should he choose to enter the lists and contest for the love of the pretty actress!

"The fellow is just what I was twenty-five or thirty years ago," the Judge thought, as he left the court-room, "and a woman is sometimes fool enough to prefer an adroit scoundrel with a handsome face and plausible tongue to a man a little advanced in years, even if he has money at his back."

Bruyn went straight down to his office in Wall street. He was pretty deeply engaged in some large real-estate speculations, and still retained his office although he had almost given up legal practice.

Receiving his morning mail from the clerk, he passed into the inner office, his *sanctum*, and began to peruse his letters. He was interrupted, after ten or fifteen minutes, by the clerk, who informed him that a deputation of gentlemen wished to see him in the outer room.

Proceeding thither, Bruyn saw at a glance that his visitors were nearly all officers of the metropolitan police—that is, all that he knew of the party were. They were in plain clothes now, and evidently off duty.

"Good-day, Judge," said one of the gentlemen, who stood in advance of the rest, and had apparently been deputed to act as spokesman for the rest.

"Good-day, gentlemen," the Judge replied, with an inquiring glance as though with an intent to ask the reason of their visit.

"Judge, you must excuse our calling upon you about a little legal business, but we thought that possibly we might get you to undertake our case, although we understood that you do not practice much at present. But, Judge, we're all of us

from your district, and have backed you up good and strong when things were mighty close on election-day," said the spokesman of the party.

"I know that, gentlemen," the Judge replied. "I don't forget my friends; what do you want?"

"Mort Burke is dead—killed by George Dominick, and we want you to go in and help the District Attorney to swing this Gentleman George."

CHAPTER XXX.

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY.

The announcement of the death of the wounded policeman naturally created quite a deal of talk among those who had taken an interest in the trial of Gentleman George, and the interest created was not at all allayed when it was publicly reported that the eminent lawyer, Judge Bruyn, would give his services to the prosecution. Of course people naturally understood that the Judge had been retained by the friends of the murdered man, eager for justice upon the slayer.

Counselor Watt, the Three-Decker, seated in his office, within the shadows of the gloomy pile, known as the Tombs, gave a start of astonishment when he read the intelligence in a morning newspaper, that Nicholas Bruyn would assist the District Attorney in the trial of George Dominick.

The counselor was annoyed and disgusted.

"The case is bad enough as it is without having to fight half a dozen lawyers," he muttered, discontentedly.

The Three-Decker had met Judge Bruyn before, and feared his power over a jury. As well as any other living man who followed the law for a trade did the astute counselor know the weight of a plausible appeal to the twelve men, "good and true"—whom the newspapers generally playfully designate as the twelve idiots—within whose hands the fate of a prisoner rests.

Judge Bruyn's great power as a lawyer lay in his specious oratory.

The death of the wounded man who had been stricken down in the discharge of his duty by the bullet of the river-thief, naturally made quite a difference in the manner of conducting the trial. The coroner's jury had first to return their verdict. The proceedings were hurried through with railroad-like rapidity, despite the efforts of Counselor Watt to retard the progress, and within a week George Dominick stood duly accused before the bar of justice with the murder of Mortimer Burke. Then came the fight over the selection of a jury to try the case, in which the Three-Decker manfully contested the putting of any man on the jury who had ever read any newspaper account of the case, or who looked as if he possessed sense enough to keep himself out of the insane asylum. But all mortal things must have an end, and the jury was at last impaneled.

The counselor was not at all satisfied when the jury took their seats on the opening day of the trial, and he got a good look at them. It was a pretty fair-looking jury, as juries go, and the Three-Decker saw to his dismay that three or four men in the box really looked as if they possessed an average amount of common sense, and to the mind of the notorious criminal lawyer, common sense was a most dangerous thing to be possessed by a juror.

The jury in their seats, then came the tiresome details of the trial, tiresome to all, except the badgered witnesses, the cunning lawyers and the pale-face man who sat in the prisoner's box, on trial for his life.

Upon the prisoner's side the first witness produced was his wife, who testified that, on the night of the murder, her husband had accompanied her to her father's house, and had remained there until after twelve o'clock, and clearly stated that it was five minutes past twelve before they had left the house to go home to their own dwelling. Dominick's wife's father, Christopher Walebone, fully corroborated this statement, as also did his daughter, Penelope.

Now as Mickey Shea had positively sworn that he and the prisoner at the bar, George Dominick, had embarked from the foot of Market street, between eleven and half-past eleven, and had emphatically declared, in answer to a question from Counselor Watt, that he was positive that it was before half-past eleven that the River-Rats had started on their expedition, this rather weakened Shea's evidence. The object that the Three-Decker had in holding the witness so closely to the time that the embarkation had taken place, was not apparent until the rebutting testimony was introduced; then it was perfectly plain that the object was to throw doubts upon the truth of Mr. Shea's statements. As to the wound in the shoulder, Mrs. Dominick testified that, on the morning after the night on which the policeman had been wounded, in carelessly handling her husband's revolver, it had exploded in her hand, and the ball had taken an erratic course across the room, chipped the post of the bed, and then had entered her husband's shoulder, he at the time being extended upon the bed.

Then the counselor brought up four doctors who had examined both the bed-post and the wound in Dominick's shoulder, and they fully testified that it was their belief that the wound could have been inflicted in such a manner.

This strong testimony rather shook the evidence that had been given by two doctors, witnesses for the government, who had examined the wound in the prisoner's shoulder, and expressed their opinion that it had been inflicted by a spent ball, as described by Michael Shea, Esq.

And then the counselor paid his respects to the principal witness on the side of the prosecution. In a delicate way he drew out from him the damaging admission that he had been "up to the Island" three or four times; had also paid a visit to Sing-Sing, and even now was under heavy bonds to answer in an assault and battery case. Of course during the examination of Mr. Shea, there was an almost constant wrangle between the lawyers. One objected, and the other insisted, and a half-a-dozen times the Judge was obliged to interfere in order to restrain the ponderous counselor, and keep him within the bounds prescribed both by law and courtesy.

And the result was that the spectators witnessed one of those disgraceful scenes so common—unhappily—in our courts of justice, and if one of the spectators could have closed his eyes, with no great stretch of the imagination, he might easily have thought that he was listening to some bar-room brawl common to election time.

Then Judge Bruyn, calm, able and smiling, reviewed the case. He clearly showed how easily an *alibi* could be proven even in the most desperate cases. He did not attempt to attack the credibility of the witnesses for the prisoner, but simply related the history of an English case when a prisoner had established an *alibi* by witnesses who swore as to his being in a certain place at a certain time, and how the prisoner had cunningly tampered with the clocks before the commission of the deed that he was accused of on purpose to prove an *alibi*, and so, on the evidence of innocent but deceived witnesses, he nearly escaped the punishment due to his outrage of the laws; and as to Mickey Shea, he simply described the man who had felt the power of the law, and, terrified by the weight of its iron hand, had tremblingly come forward to do one act of justice; and had surrendered himself, bound hand and foot as it were, to answer for his misdeeds, and Judge Bruyn took it upon himself to declare that the Government had made no agreement with the witness whereby, in consequence of his evidence, he was to be shielded from punishment.

And then the Judge briefly reviewed the career of the prisoner at the bar as far as it was known to the police. A bank-robber and confidence-man, always "wanted" and never captured; a man as able and skillful as he was wicked; a very Brigand of Society who preyed upon his fellow-men as ruthlessly as the footpad who beat his victim to the ground with a bludgeon or choked him, *garote* fashion, while a companion went through his pockets.

When Judge Bruyn finished his speech and sat down, a little murmur of admiration went through the court. Short, and apparently without effort as the speech was, it covered the ground thoroughly; each point was a fact planted in the dull brains of the wearied jury; no glittering generalities to dazzle and befog, but stubborn statements difficult to evade and impossible to answer.

Then the Judge delivered his charge to the jury; not a lengthy one but quite to the point, and it bore hard on the prisoner.

The Three-Decker moved uneasily in his seat while he listened to it.

The Judge carefully drew attention to the witness who swore to the *alibi*, and then to the principal witness for the Government who swore so positively to the presence of the prisoner in the boat, and to his firing the shot which gave the policeman his death-wound.

Although the Judge did not say so, in plain words, yet he inferred that the balance of proof was against the prisoner.

And the Judge, too, spoke of the Brigand of Society as being the most dangerous of his class, dangerous because he had brains as well as hands. Ugly words these for Gentleman George.

The jury retired to deliberate upon their verdict.

George set his teeth firmly together; the warm rays of the afternoon sun that stole in through the curtained window, and played at hide and seek upon the uncarpeted floor, seemed to mock him with their bright, gladsome beams. They revealed to his mind the contrast between a life of freedom and the prison-cell, or worse still, the dark embraces of a felon's grave.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

Miss Desmond, idly reclining in a rocking-chair in her little parlor, was perusing the afternoon paper. She had just finished the account of the trial of Gentleman George.

"I wonder what the verdict will be!" she murmured, and as she spoke, her smooth, white brow was furrowed over by the lines of thought. "Will they hang him?" A half-hidden shudder came over the slender form at the thought. "That would be dreadful, and yet he deserves it. How strange that he and Judge Bruyn should come in contact! What an excellent speech the Judge made, too. He knows that I called upon George in the Tombs. I am sure of it, or else he would not have questioned me regarding him."

Then for quite a long time the woman was silent, deep in thought. Her meditations were not altogether pleasant, judging by the expression upon her face.

"It fairly made my blood run cold the other day when the Judge questioned me about George. I think I succeeded in baffling him though, keen and skillful as he is," she exclaimed,

abruptly. "Suppose by any chance that this haughty millionaire should discover my secret? Ah! good-by then to my scheme." And with the thought the actress sprung to her feet and paced up and down the room, her lips pressed firmly together and her little white hands clenched.

"I don't want them to hang George, badly as he deceived me, but I do wish that they would send him somewhere so that he will not trouble me."

Miss Desmond paused by the window and gazed out upon crowded Broadway.

"Gentleman George in the State Prison and I the wife of Nicholas Bruyn," she murmured, thoughtfully. "Oh! what a glorious vengeance that would be! What a recompense for the wrongs of the past and the many pangs of pain that I have suffered in these long and weary years! And to have this man of ice—this cold-hearted, treacherous Bruyn at my feet; to see him kneel in humble adoration, when, if he only knew who and what I am, he would spurn me from him with contempt and loathing. How many in this life could play as bold a part as I do now?"

Scornfully and with arrogance in voice and face the actress put the question.

The abrupt entrance of the negress, Juno, interrupted Miss Desmond's meditation.

"What is it, Juno?" the actress demanded, understanding at once from the manner of the negress that she bore a message.

"Dar's a gemmen down-stairs dat wants to see you, Missy."

"Turn him away at once!" Miss Desmond exclaimed, resuming her seat in the rocking-chair as she spoke, and picking up the newspaper which she had dropped.

"Yes, Missy, I know what you allers tole me fur to do, but dis yere gemmen ain't like the rest of 'em," the negress said, slowly.

"Oh, they are all alike!" the actress exclaimed, impatiently. "I am not at home to any one. You must remember and not allow any person to persuade you to the contrary."

"But dis yere gemmen ain't none of yer common trash," the negro woman protested; "he's a real gemmen for sure, an' says dat he wants fur to see you on 'ticular business."

"That is what they all say," Miss Desmond replied, quite enraged that any stranger should be able to produce such an impression upon her vigilant janitor. "What is that you have there?" she continued, noticing something white in the hand of the negress; "is it the gentleman's card?"

"Yes, Missy." The actress took the card from the extended hand. A single line of print only on the smooth white surface.

The name, Neil Jemmison. Just a moment Miss Desmond looked at the card, and then with an expression of rage upon her face, she crumpled it up fiercely in her hand and threw it away.

"Tell him that I am not at home to any one!" she exclaimed, quickly and imperiously, "and if he will not take no for an answer, show him the door and put him out by main force, if he refuses to go. I suppose that you are big enough to do that?"

"I dunno, Missy," the negress said, shaking her head in a dubious manner. "Dis yere gemmen ain't one of dat kind dat you kin sling t'r'ugh de door. He ain't one of 'em starched young fellas wid poseys in dere button-hole. I'll tell him dat you ain't home; dat's de way I'll fix it."

Juno then withdrew, leaving Miss Desmond in a very peculiar state of mind.

The negress descended at once to the front door where she had left the gentleman who desired to see Miss Desmond on particular business, and whose card bore the name of Neil Jemmison.

The negro woman had left the gentleman standing outside the door, but on her return, she found that he had taken advantage of her absence to come inside and had also closed the door after him.

It was the "doctor" in person who waited for audience with the charming young actress.

As the negress descended the stairs and discovered that the gentleman was in the hall and had closed the door behind him, she shook her head gravely. She began to have an idea that she had a troublesome task in hand.

"I'se done gone and seen, sar, an' she ain't home," Juno said.

"Ah, did you give her my card and tell her that I wished to see her on very particular business?" Jemmison asked, entirely ignoring what the negress had said.

Juno stared in surprise.

"Deed, sar, I done tole you dat she ain't at home for sure," she said, earnestly.

"Oh, yes, I understand all about that," Jemmison replied, in the most careless manner possible; "you are to tell me that she is not at home. The lady thought that was the easiest and best way to get rid of me."

"Deed, sar, it's the blessed trust!" declared the negress, stoutly.

"You are quite a valuable janitor, you lie with a coolness that is perfectly refreshing."

"No, sar, I ain't done tole no lie!" exclaimed Juno, indignantly. "I tole you dat de lady isn't at home."

"And when will she be at home?" demanded Jemmison, abruptly.

Juno hesitated; she had not been instructed by her mistress upon this point.

"I don't know, sar."

"She will come home sometime, I suppose!"

"Yas, sar—I s'pose so," Juno replied, very slowly.

"Well, I will wait until she does come home," and Jemmison smiled, serenely, in the face of the woman.

"No, sir!" cried the negress, enraged, "you can't wait hyer, white man. You jes' go out of dat door now."

"And if I don't accept your polite invitation and go out?" Jemmison asked, smiling in a manner that both enraged and awed the woman.

"Fore de Lord, I'll put you out for sure!" Juno cried, advancing in menace.

"Do you know what I'll do if you try that sort of proceeding upon me?" Jemmison asked, his face as smiling as ever, but a dangerous light shining in his dark eyes.

"You's gwine out, dat's all," retorted Juno, irresolutely.

"I shall forget the respect due to your sex, take you by the nap of the neck and fling you out into the street," and as he spoke, Jemmison advanced a step toward the negress.

Juno retreated in alarm. The cool, determined manner of the man frightened her; besides, she felt pretty well convinced from his looks that he was able to accomplish the feat of ejecting her from her own threshold. As she had informed her mistress, it was no dandy young man this time.

"Look out, white man! don't you dar' to put your han' on me!" Juno cried, threateningly, retreating to the first stair as she spoke.

"I know your mistress is at home, for I saw her at the window from the other side of the street, not ten minutes ago," Jemmison said; "and I'll swear that she has not left the house since then. Now go up-stairs, tell your mistress that the gentleman will not go away; that he wishes to see her on particular business, and that he will not leave the house until he does see her."

"She won't see you, anyhow," Juno muttered.

"Just you tell her what I say!" Jemmison said, sternly, "and if there is any more talk of putting me out by force, you just tell her that the probable result of such a course will be that we will all fetch up in the station-house, and I don't think that will annoy me as much as it will her."

Juno departed to bear the message.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT LAST.

THE actress was lazily reclining in the easy-chair, her eyes closed as if she were sleeping, when the negress re-entered the room.

Nor did she change her position at the entrance of the perplexed Juno. At the first glance the woman imagined that her mistress was unconscious of her approach, but a second look detected just a little trembling motion of the lips which plainly showed that Miss Desmond was wide awake.

The negress, coarse and brutal by nature and not given to closely analyzing the motives of others, did not stop to ask herself why Miss Desmond should pretend an indifference which clearly she did not feel, or why the visit of the serene but determined stranger should so annoy her.

"Missy, it ain't no kind of use, he won't go; he's jes' gwine to see you or bu'st things for sure!" Juno blurted out.

Miss Desmond opened her eyes languidly.

"He will not go?"

"No, Missy."

"Why don't you put him out then, as you did the others who would not be satisfied with no for an answer?" the actress asked, coldly, and as she spoke there was a strange expression upon her pale face; anger and fear were wondrously blended there.

"I can't do it, Missy!" replied Juno, bluntly. "I jes' tole him dat ef he wouldn't go I'd tote him into de street, an' he jes' squar' himself and sed dat he'd put me dere ef I didn't hush my mouf."

"And were you afraid that he would do so?" Miss Desmond asked, endeavoring to conceal her agitation and to assume a contemptuous air.

"Yes, I is, sure as you're born!" Juno exclaimed, doggedly. "I's isn't gwine to fool 'round dat air white man; he's ugly, he is! 'Fore de Lord, he sed dat ef I tried fur to put him out dat he'd aling me into de street, an' den dat he'd have de hull lot on us fotched up afore de police, an' dat dat would trouble you a heap sight more dan it would him."

Miss Desmond listened attentively to the words of the negress, and at the mention of the police she clenched her teeth together tightly and for a moment or so the breath came fast and hard.

"The police," the actress said, slowly, and after quite a long pause.

"Yes, ma'am, dat's what he sed; I wish I may die dis blessed min'te ef I didn't hear him say it with my own two ears."

"And what have the police to do with either you or me—or with this stranger for that matter?" Miss Desmond remarked, very slowly. One gifted with the art of reading the thoughts in the face would easily have detected that there was a terrible struggle going on in the mind of the actress, and yet long years of constant dissimulation had so molded the mobile features of the woman that it was but seldom that her face betrayed her thoughts.

"Deed I dunno, Missy!" replied Juno, shaking her head.

sagely, as much as to indicate that the question was a conundrum and that she gave it up.

Miss Desmond came to an abrupt decision.

"Since this person is so determined in his purpose to see me, you may show him up, Juno."

The voice of the actress betrayed no sign of emotion; her face was calm, a trifle pale perhaps, but that was all.

"Yes, ma'am; 'deed I's glad dat you is gwine for to see dis yere gemman!" Juno ejaculated. "Dis yere nigger do'sn't want for to have anything fur to do wid de perlice."

"Show him up; I do not think that it will take me long to get rid of him," the actress said.

Was the boast to strengthen a fluttering heart, or was it the true index of power?

"Yes, ma'am," and then Juno departed, but, as she left the room, she muttered lowly to herself, and, the burden of her discourse was that she in person didn't care to "interview" the self-possessed stranger again.

"If you please to walk dis yere way, sar," the negress said, speaking from the top of the stairs.

Neil Jemmison did not wait for a second invitation, but immediately ascended the stairs.

"Dat door, sar!" the negress exclaimed when Jemmison came up to her, pointing to the door at the further end of the entry, which led to the little parlor of the actress.

"Thank you," Jemmison said, politely, passing by the woman and advancing at once to the door indicated.

Jemmison's steps were direct, his action resolute, yet his face was pale and his heart was beating high with excitement. Another moment and he would be face to face with the woman for whom he had sought so long, and who had, until now, so completely evaded his search.

The "Doctor" tapped at the door, the low sweet voice of Miss Desmond said "Come," and the next moment Neil Jemmison and the actress were face to face.

Miss Desmond had risen from her chair and was leaning carelessly upon the back of it, her face turned from the window to the door, and upon it was a fretful, impatient look, as though she resented the intrusion.

Within the room, two steps from the door, Jemmison halted. A rigid, searching look he bent upon the features of the young and pretty woman before him. If he had any doubts as to the correctness of his guess that the actress was indeed the woman whom he sought, the glance would have dispelled it.

"Well, sir, I am waiting to know the reason of this intrusion!" Miss Desmond exclaimed, impatiently. "My servant informed me that you insisted upon seeing me, although I sent word that I was not at home to any one. I did not for a moment imagine that any gentleman would insist upon intruding upon a lady when informed that she declined to receive him."

"You are disposed to treat me as a stranger, then?" was Jemmison's calm reply.

"In what other light should I look upon you, sir?" the actress demanded, quickly and sharply, an expression of astonishment upon her face as she put the question.

"And yet I am not a stranger to you," Jemmison's voice was firm and low—more of sorrowful reproach than of menace in his tone.

"I really beg your pardon, sir, but I am positive that I never had the pleasure of your acquaintance!" the actress replied, coldly and distantly.

"And I am sure that you have," Jemmison retorted.

"Sir, you are an utter stranger to me!" Miss Desmond exclaimed, angrily. "If I had ever had the pleasure of your acquaintance it is not likely that I should forget the fact."

"You do not forget it," Jemmison replied, sternly; "nor can you juggle me with any of your stage tricks. I have not forgotten you, although it is years since we have met, and you have managed to change your appearance wonderfully, but I recognized you the moment I saw you. I met you on the Bowery some time ago, dressed very plainly, and tracked you to the neighborhood of Water and Market streets, and there you managed to elude me. I thought that you had descended the low sub-strata of mire, which is the natural end to the career of all such women as you are—the end which years ago I prophesied would be yours. I expected to find you in some low den, poor and degraded; judge then of my surprise when, happening to stroll into Niblo's Garden, I found you strangely transformed into one of the magnets of the stage. I recognized you, though, on the instant. For a certain reason which I will soon explain, I wished to see you, and so I sought this interview, and you can be satisfied that I will not leave, this room until I learn what I wish to know."

Miss Desmond listened to the words of Jemmison with an expression of utter amazement written upon her face, and then, when he had finished, she looked around in apparent alarm, as if seeking assistance.

"Oh, heaven! the man is mad!" she murmured half aloud.

The quick ears of Jemmison caught the meaning of the muttered words.

"Bah!" he cried in utter contempt, "what is the use of playing your stage arts upon me? I am not a child nor an idiot. You can not trick me out of my belief; I am quite sure that you are the woman I take you to be."

"You are mad, sir, to persist in this folly!" Miss Desmond exclaimed, indignantly. "For whom do you take me?"

"Eighteen or twenty years ago, you were called Lina Aton, and worked in a fancy store in Division street, near the Bowery," Jemmison replied.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT BAY.

FOR a minute or two there was a dead silence.

The actress stared at her visitor in profound amazement, not a muscle in her face betrayed any other sentiment, and Jemmison, even despite his firm belief, was almost inclined to think that he had been deceived by one of those strange resemblances, which, though not common, are not impossible; but as he, wavering in his mind, gazed upon the woman upon whose privacy he had intruded so rudely, he noticed that the small white hand, which rested upon the top of the rocking-chair, clenched it with so firm a grip that the little pink nails were almost driven into the wood.

Jemmison, quick of eye and astute of judgment, from this little circumstance perceived at once the artifice of this woman.

"I really don't know what to say to you, sir," she said, her face betraying both amazement and perplexity. "You do not seem to believe me when I assure you that you have made a mistake, and that I do not know you, and I presume that you will be equally incredulous when I say that I was never called Lina Aton, that I never worked in a fancy-store in Division street—or in any other street, either in this city or elsewhere, and that eighteen or twenty years ago I was a very small girl indeed, attending school at Cincinnati, Ohio. I am only twenty-five now, so, if you are not entirely insane upon this subject, you must clearly perceive that I can not be the person that you assume to think I am."

"You are playing a desperate game, Lina, but it will not succeed, boldly as you play," Jemmison replied. "You know me of old; you should remember that I have an iron will, and that I seldom forget either my friends or my foes. In this world, so far, I have always succeeded in paying my debts with one exception: I owe you something."

Cold and calm as was the tone of the man, it struck a chill to the heart of the woman. With an involuntary motion she retreated behind the rocking-chair, and for a moment looked as though she intended to cry for assistance.

A contemptuous smile came over Jemmison's features, as he divined the half-formed purpose of the woman, so apparent in her face.

"You guess very readily for an entire stranger what that something is," Jemmison continued.

"I guess that you menace me," the actress retorted, quickly, "and I freely confess that I believe you to be crazy, and it is little wonder that I am alarmed."

"You are resolved then to deny your identity?" Jemmison continued.

"No, not my identity, but that I am the woman whom you once knew, and whom you call Lina Aton," Miss Desmond answered.

"It is useless to deny the truth; you are Lina Aton, the shop-girl of Division street, who, some eighteen years ago, married a young medical student named Neil Jemmison."

"I should imagine that you are going to relate a romance, to judge from the beginning," the actress said, contemptuously.

"Few romances equal the stern realities of actual life," Jemmison replied, "but perhaps it will be plainer to you if I adopt the plan of the eastern story-teller, and under garb of fiction tell you truth."

"Will you leave me and go away?" Miss Desmond exclaimed, petulantly. "Again and again I deny that I am the person you know. My name is Ellen Desmond; two months ago I came to New York for the first time, and I have never even heard of a woman called Lina Aton."

"You may deceive the world, but you cannot deceive me," Jemmison replied, firmly. "Now listen to the story of your life, and declare it false if you can. Twenty years ago you were a shop girl in Division street; you formed a chance acquaintance with a young medical student, then boarding in East Broadway near Market street, and after a courtship of two years you married him. Three years of wedded life followed; a child was born during those three years, and in that time the husband learned to hate the woman whom he had sworn at the altar to love and protect. He found that the little brown-haired angel—"

"Brown hair!" cried the actress, suddenly, interrupting Jemmison's romance.

"Yes, brown hair."

"And mine is golden!" she cried, in a tone of triumph.

"My story will account for that," he replied, calmly.

Just a single flash of fire came from the eyes of the actress; it was in her heart to kill the man who confronted her so coldly, and who wore to her the face of a judge and the heart of an executioner.

The glance did not escape the keen eyes of Jemmison; it was to him as if the mask that covered the face before him had been cast aside for a second and then suddenly replaced.

"To resume my 'romance,' the young, tender, and loving husband discovered, a short time after his marriage, that his wife had far more of the demon than of the angel in her composition. He was a man of the world; poor, he had felt the teeth of adversity; careless, reckless, he had braved hard fortune, and wrested content even from privation, and such a man was not to be made a fool of, even by the woman that he loved. When he discovered that the girl whom he thought pure, innocent and guileless was but a desperate adventuress; that, instead of his being the first love of her young heart, as she had so often protested between her passionate kisses, he was the second or the tenth, maybe—for he had discovered posi-

tive proof that she had at least one husband if not more, and that that husband was still living—that she had willfully and deliberately lied to him, his love changed to indifference; but she was his wife, and he determined that, whatever her career had been in the past, she should lead a life without reproach in the future. And then came a child, strangely unlike either the mother or father, with blue eyes and light hair. All the love Neil Jemmison had felt for the woman, who proved so unworthy, he gave to the child. When the infant was some two months old, the father became convinced that the mother designed to fly from her home and take the child with her. He openly accused the woman, and swore a bitter oath that if she did steal his child he would hunt her down and kill her with his own hand, even if she fled to the very ends of the earth. She, biding her time, fled at last, and robbed the father of his child, and what was worse, she contrived to baffle all pursuit."

"Your romance, then, as far as the woman is concerned, ends here," Miss Desmond said, not a trace of agitation visible upon her marble-like face.

"No; I use the privilege of the story-teller, and can easily relate her career," Jemmison answered, calmly. "When she fled from her husband she went west, and sought concealment in some small city. A skillful seamstress, she easily supported herself. Some four years ago, chance led her to adopt the stage as a profession. She called herself Ellen Desmond, had her hair bleached from brown to gold, and with caustic compounds burned away the small mole on the left cheek, and the two moles on the right arm, the marks which might serve to identify her if any one who knew her in the past should happen to see her in her new vocation. That chance came to pass. On the stage, the scene of her triumphs, turning with a smile upon her face, from acknowledging a tribute of flowers, she caught sight of the man in the audience whose presence there boded danger to her. And then, three hours later, descending from the *Maison Doree* to her carriage, she came face to face with him, so near that she could almost feel his breath upon her cheek. Again she trembled, for now she understood that she was recognized. Like Macbeth, she was tied and could not fly, and so, desperate, she resolved to brave the danger. At last the threatened blow came. At first she denied herself to him; refused to see him, but finding that he would not go away, she, at last forced to the wall, determined to take refuge in her old resource, a maze of lies. She permitted Neil Jemmison to see her; denied her identity; pointed for proof to her golden hair, and her young-looking face, forgetting that, despite the effect of the alteration of her locks, from brown to gold, her face for twenty years has hardly changed a particle, and is the strongest evidence of her identity."

The actress had listened attentively to the words of her visitor; and during his recital the expression upon her face had never changed.

A lion-heart the woman bore within her breast, if, indeed, as Neil Jemmison asserted, she was Lina Aton.

"And I suppose that it only remains for you to kill me according to your oath, and so end the romance in the approved manner," she said; "but I warn you, sir, that there are half-a-dozen persons in the house within reach of my voice; and if you attempt to molest me, I shall call for assistance. I will not submit to be murdered by a madman."

Jemmison shook his head.

"Eighteen years have made me wiser than I was," he spoke quite deliberately, no trace of passion in his voice or manner. "I am content now to leave you to Heaven's justice. I have sought you for one object only; I desire to learn what has become of my child?"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE JURY.

THE twelve men who composed the jury filed slowly into the jury-room; the foreman locked the door behind him, and the deliberation as to the innocence or guilt of Gentleman George commenced.

The jury-room, with its one long table and its twelve chairs, and the hot beams of the sun streaming in through the window-blinds, was not a remarkably inviting place; and each one of the twelve men who formed the jury mentally wished, as he looked around him, that the stay behind the locked door would not be a very lengthy one.

Twelve men, good and true, and a fellow being's fate in their hands.

And who were the twelve men whose verdict would either give Gentleman George to the world again or else confine him to a convict's cell, or maybe give his neck to the hangman's noose?

Andrew Hamersley, dry goods clerk, foreman of the jury, a lively go-ahead business-man of thirty-five; Isaac Jones, coach-maker, a steady, middle-aged Englishman; James Egbert, carman, a stolid-looking man of forty; Benjamin Haight, saddler, a little, dried-up man of thirty-five, or thereabouts, with a sober, honest face; Samuel Delap, painter, an intelligent-looking young fellow; Michael Fallum, salesman—hardware, a young Irishman, twenty-eight or so; William Kemble, watchmaker, a high-bearded, gentleman of forty-four; John Ramsay, banker's clerk, a dashy young man of twenty-three; Patrick Spence, liquors (keeper of a low corner grogery, "up-

town,") a bull-headed, iron-jawed man; Daniel Nitchie, junk dealer, a fat-faced, common-looking foreigner, forty-seven, or thereabouts; Peter Murray, broker, bald-headed, oily and middle-aged; Marinus Blake, grocery clerk, a dull-faced German of twenty-one.

It was a pretty fair jury, as juries go, although the counsel for the government had objected to both Patrick Spence (liquors) and Daniel Nitchie (junk dealer); and the counsel for the prisoner—the Three-Decker—had objected, vehemently to all of the jury *except* to the two men mentioned above.

The District Attorney had objected to the two men really because he had an idea that the keeper of a low liquor saloon patronized by thieves and roughs, and a dealer in junk, always open to the suspicion of trading with the Rats of the River in stolen property, would not be apt to convict a criminal, no matter how plain his guilt might appear.

And the Three-Decker had objected to each of the ten men, against whose honesty or respectability no word could be said, because he felt assured that his client would not receive "justice" at their hands, as they would be apt to find him guilty if the evidence went that way, no matter how artfully he might interpose the cobwebs of legal lore to blind their vision.

But the twelve men were duly qualified, and now in solemn conclave they deliberated upon their verdict.

The foreman of the jury, busy, straightforward Mr. Hamersley, proceeded at once to the business in hand.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, pulling one of the twelve chairs to the head of the table, and sitting down, "let us get to work right away. I suppose that you all agree with me that the quicker we settle this matter, and are set free to attend to our own affairs, the better."

Each one of the jury at once signified that they were in perfect accord with this sentiment.

"And as the shortest way is generally the best, let us ascertain how we stand upon the question before us," the foreman continued. "If you will have the goodness to draw your chairs up to the table, gentlemen, I will poll you as to your opinions."

The eleven men took their chairs, and seated themselves at the table in obedience to Mr. Hamersley's suggestion.

"For my own part I have fully made up my mind," Hamersley said, after the rest were seated. "I believe that this man is guilty of the killing of the policeman; and I think that our verdict ought to be murder in the first degree. All who agree with me will please hold up their hands."

Up went seven hands in the air. Jones, Egbert, Haight, Delap, Fallum, Kemble and Ramsay agreed with the foreman; Spence, Nitchie, Murray and Blake dissented.

"Now we know how we stand; eight to four," Hamersley continued; "and we must settle this matter by argument. We eight should be pleased to learn what the ideas of you four are on this subject. I presume that is the easiest way to settle the thing, isn't it, gentlemen?" The foreman appealed to the seven whose hands had gone up in the air.

As one man the seven nodded assent.

"I will commence in regular order, and take the gentleman nearest to me, and so on," Hamersley announced. "Now, sir," addressing Spence, "what verdict are you willing to give?"

"I don't know, sur, exactly," replied Spence. "I don't think that the murder was deliberate, d'ye mind? It was a foight; the perlice were a-firin' at him, an' sure, it was only human nature for him to hit back."

"You think that it should be murder in the second degree?" the foreman asked.

"I'm doubtful in my mind," Spence replied; "but I'm ag'in' hanging the man. Maybe I'd be willing to bring it in manslaughter."

"And how do you feel in regard to it?" asked Hamersley, turning to Nitchie.

"I agree mit dis shendleman," replied Nitchie, with his strong foreign accent.

The junk-dealer was not really a receiver of stolen goods—that is, he would not buy them knowing them to be the products of a robbery, but he never asked any questions, and it went against his conscience to convict a "Rat" for shooting one of that class of men who had so often interfered with his business by reason of frightening away his customers.

Hamersley understood at once that this settled the matter as far as Nitchie's reason was concerned.

"And your sentiments on this subject?" addressing Murray, who sat next to Hamersley on the left of the table.

"I am really in doubt as to some points in the evidence against this man," said Murray, whose mind, used to legal subtleties, and quick to admire the genius which turns wrong into right, and makes black quite light-colored, if not entirely white, had given due weight to the ingenious argument of Counselor Watt.

"What points?" demanded Hamersley, with business-like directness.

Now, although the plausible words of the great legal luminary who conducted the defense, had due effect on Murray's mind, yet, when he came to think them over, as a preliminary to explaining his reason for objecting to the verdict of murder in the first degree, he suddenly discovered that he had taken upon himself an extremely difficult task, and, although to his own mind, the reasons seemed strong enough, yet when he undertook to frame them into words, he saw how weak they would appear.

So like many an abler man, he took refuge in glittering generalities.

"Well, I am no lawyer," Murray said, with an air of great

dignity," nor gifted with the eloquence necessary for a man who rises in public to explain in terse and forcible language the sentiments which—which, I may say, gentlemen, I feel within my bosom—" and then the broker paused in confusion, and commenced to mop his bald head, vigorously, with his red silk handkerchief.

"But, what verdict would you be willing to agree to?" persisted the foreman, impatiently. Hamersley was a plain man of business, and didn't believe in using ten words where five would do.

"Well—I—am really unable to say," the broker said. "I should prefer to hear the opinions of all the other gentlemen expressed;" and then Murray smiled benignantly at the rest of the jury.

"Eight of us have expressed our opinion pretty plainly," the foreman reminded him. "We think that the prisoner is guilty of deliberate murder, and that he ought to be hung. Two men are in favor of a lighter punishment. There is only one more gentleman to hear from. What is your opinion, sir?" Hamersley addressed Blake (grocery clerk), who sat at the foot of the table facing the foreman.

"I think that he is innocent and ought to be let go."

There was a general start of amazement at this answer.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FINDING A VERDICT.

FOR a minute at least eleven jurymen sat and stared at the twelfth, amazement written on each face.

And as for the man who had created such a ripple of astonishment, so to speak, he sat with stolid face, as if unconscious of the effect that his words had produced.

Blake was hardly more than an overgrown boy, and from his face it was plainly evident that he was not gifted with any extra amount of brains.

But, from his dull, stolid face, one would have been apt to regard him more as a fool than a rogue.

"Really, I confess I am not sure that I understand your remark, sir," the foreman of the jury said. "Did you say you thought the prisoner was innocent and ought to be acquitted?"

"That's what I said," Blake replied, placidly.

"Well, sir, I am at a loss to guess by what process of reasoning you can arrive at any such conclusion!" Hamersley exclaimed, in amazement.

Blake did not reply.

"Perhaps our friend at the lower end of the table believes, from the evidence of the old man and the wife of the prisoner, that he was not present when the officer was shot?" suggested the broker, in his smooth, oily way.

Blake made no answer to this implied explanation or excuse for his opinion. He was leaning on his elbow on the table, resting the side of his head on his hand and staring vacantly up at the ceiling.

After waiting a little while, and finding that Blake did not intend to say any thing, the foreman spoke up, with decision:

"Well, gentlemen, for my part I don't believe a word of their testimony! Nor do I think that it is at all worthy of belief. I'm a New York boy, born and bred here, and, to my certain knowledge, when any of these rascals get into trouble the rest of the gang will swear to any thing to get him out. They will stick to one another."

"So do the perlicemen," said Spence, (liquors), gruffly; "the half of them are as bad as the thieves. It's in the same boat they are."

"Dat ish so," affirmed Nitchie, (junk-dealer).

"Well, that is not my experience, gentlemen," observed another of the jurymen, Jones, (coach-maker,) who had all the English respect for the men in authority.

"I don't see that this question has any thing to do with the case in hand at all!" the foreman remarked, impatiently. "The strong evidence against the prisoner is the testimony of Shea, who was with him in the boat and saw him fire the shot."

"Shure he's a cowardly informer!" exclaimed Spence, bitterly.

"What has that got to do with it?" demanded Hamersley, in astonishment.

"An informer's worse than a thief!"

A certain instance was still fresh in the mind of the liquor-dealer of how a party who had a grudge against him had once procured "drinks" of him on Sunday and then had gone straight to the police-station and "informed" on him.

"Dat ish true," the junkman assented, gravely. He likewise had once got into trouble by reason of an informer.

"But the man was under oath," Egbert (carman) said, in a stubborn sort of way, as if that fact was enough to carry conviction to any one.

"Shure I wouldn't belave an informer if he swore on a stack of Bibles!" cried Spence, indignantly.

"Gentlemen, we are wandering from the subject!" Hamersley declared. "Gentlemen, I move that the gentleman at the foot of the table give us his reason for assuming that the prisoner is innocent."

"Yes, yes," muttered three or four of the majority.

"Now, sir, if you will have the kindness to satisfy our curiosity upon this point, we'll be obliged to you, and perhaps,

too, we shall be able to convince you that the stand you have taken is untenable."

"Give us your r'ason, man, anyway!" exclaimed Spence, who felt curious upon the point.

The juror, thus directly addressed, suffered his eyes to come down from the ceiling a moment and rest upon the faces now turned toward him in curious expectation.

"I sha'n't tell," said Blake, laconically.

The eleven jurymen certainly were astonished.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed the foreman, in despair, "it is no use wasting time after such an answer as that. I move that we report to the court that we can not agree."

"There's no lie in that!" Spence observed.

"But, see here, gentlemen!" cried Jones, (coachmaker), rising in his earnestness, "the Judge will never allow us to be dismissed until we do come to some sort of a verdict, or take a proper time to discuss the matter. Why, we have not been out over half an hour. I confess the case seems to me to be a very clear one, and that there is no doubt of the prisoner's guilt, although some of the jury may differ with me in regard to the extent of the punishment." Mr. Jones bowed to Spence, Nitchie and Murray. "If the young man at the end of the table has any doubts upon the legal matters, let him tell the foreman, and he can apply to the Judge and get the desired information. I've seen that done in cases where I have been on the jury before and they did not quite agree."

Jones then sat down, and again every eye was fixed upon the stubborn juror, but he showed no indication of asking for information.

"Well, any thing that you want me to ask the Judge?" the foreman said.

Blake shook his head, but did not speak.

"Oh, let's go in the court again; what's the use of foolin' like this?" Spence cried, impatiently.

"The man might give his reasons," Haight (saddler) said, coaxingly.

"Yis, wan of us might change his mind if he had good rason for it to the fore," Spence observed.

But Blake never changed his position, nor allowed his eyes to wander from the ceiling. Words were evidently wasted upon him.

"Gentlemen!" said the foreman, rising, "is it agreed, then, that we go back to the court-room and inform the Judge that we can not agree and ask to be discharged?"

The jurymen, with the exception of Blake, all looked at each other for a moment, and then, one after the other, nodded their heads to Hamersley. Blake never stirred.

The foreman gave the obstinate juror one last chance.

"Is that your wish, too, sir?"

Thus directly addressed, Blake nodded.

Then the jury filed back into the court.

A hum of conversation passed around the court-room as the jury entered, but as they took their seats a dead silence succeeded.

The Judge laid down the legal papers, which he had been perusing, and took a look at the jury.

A single glance at the troubled countenance of the foreman of the twelve men, "good and true," and the Judge instantly guessed that the jury had not been able to agree. An impatient frown came over his face, as in his mind there was no doubt of the prisoner's guilt.

Briefly the foreman stated that the jury had not been able to agree.

The Judge was not particularly given to speech-making, but on this occasion he rather "let himself out," and gave the jury such a reproof as a jury rarely gets; and at its close he told the jury to retire and not to come back until they did agree, adding, significantly, that before morning they would probably manage to find a verdict, but not to hurry themselves on his account, as he was used to waiting.

Back again to their dingy apartment the twelve men went, and again resumed their seats.

Most of the jury felt that the Judge's reproof was deserved, but Spence was as angry as a disturbed hornet.

"He manes to lock us up until we do agree!" he exclaimed, in exasperation. "Bad 'cess to him! I change my vote this minite! I say the man is not guilty now, and I'll stick to it, if I stay here till I rot!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A REMARKABLE JURY.

NEARLY all of the jurymen were struck aghast at the abrupt declaration of the Irishman.

"I repeat it!" Spence cried, glaring around him as if with intent to pick a quarrel with some one; "the man is not guilty, and that blaggard of a Judge can't make me go back of that if I stay here till I'm carried out feet furst, d'ye mind?"

"But surely you wouldn't alter your opinion simply because you think that the Judge is disposed to be a little severe?" the foreman asked, in astonishment.

"May the devil fly away wid me if I bring him in guilty, now!" cried Spence, doggedly. "Is it for the likes of a man like the Judge for to sit on the bench an' as good as say that we're no better than a pack of fools, bekase we can't agree?"

"I think that you are putting it too strongly, sir," Jones said, mildly. "I am sure I do not consider that the Judge used any reprehensible language. He simply said that it was our duty to find a verdict, and that the case appeared to him to be perfectly plain and clear. And, for my part, I fully agree with the Judge there. I do not understand how any one could listen to the evidence and not be perfectly satisfied that this man Dominick not only killed the officer, but intended to do so; or, at least, to put the affair in its mildest form—intended to disable him."

"You believe that dirty informer!" cried Spence, shaking his fist wildly in excitement.

"Most decidedly I do."

"Well, I don't!" exclaimed Spence; "an' I'm not going to hang any man on the word of such a rapparee as this Sher."

"Ah, but my dear sir, you are not obliged to hang him, you know," Murray, the oily, bald-headed broker, interposed. "I myself have grave doubts, but I should be willing to bring in a verdict that would send this man up to the State prison for a term of years. It is clearly our duty to protect society from the assaults of these ruffians," and then Mr. Murray rubbed his hands together, softly, and smiled beamingly upon his fellow-jurymen.

"Oh, yes!" retorted Spence, scornfully; "it's a ruffian he is because he's poor. If he were a rich chap, living in wan of the brown-stone fronts up on Fifth avenue, maybe you wouldn't be so airy about it. It's twenty years he'll get now if we bring in a verdict ag'in' him."

"Gents, to speak classically, there's a good deal of chin music in this crowd, but it takes money to buy whisky," said Delap (painter), one of the jury who had not previously spoken.

This peculiar remark caused the rest of the jurymen to open their eyes, with the exception of the German, Blake, who had quietly seated himself in the corner, and seemed to be half-asleep.

Delap had a good deal of what is usually called the "Bowery-Boy" style about him in person; he was a thick-set, muscular young fellow with an honest, intelligent-looking face.

"As I have said, gents, there's bin a good deal of talk," he continued, in the easy and measured way so common to the born and bred New Yorker. "Now, for my part, I'll allow that I'm kinder sick of gas, an' I move that we settle this business right up. As far as I kin see in election, there's eight of us solid for murder in the first degree, and four that ain't that way, so I jest think that we eight ought to knock under to the other four so that we can find a verdict."

"What!" cried Hamersley, in astonishment.

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the old coach-maker, rising in excitement.

"I'll be hanged if I do!" said the carman, bluntly.

"Oh, ain't that all O. K.?" asked the painter, pretending to be very much astonished. "Hadn't eight out to knuckle to four? No!—well, p'raps it ought to be the other way; the four ought to yield to the eight."

A murmur of assent went up from the eight at this, but the four mentioned did not seem to relish the idea.

"The four are not solid," Haight, the saddler, said. "There are two for acquittal and two for conviction."

"Dat ish not so," the junk-man said. "I agrees mit mine friend here," and Nitchie bowed to Spence. "I change mine vote."

"Ahal!" cried Spence, exultingly; "there's another man that isn't going to be walked over by this scut of a Judge."

"Three for acquittal, eight for murder in the first degree, and one for manslaughter," Hamersley said. "That is correct, I believe?"

"Really," Murray, the broker, observed slowly, "I believe that I must change my vote."

"Oho!" exclaimed Spence, "it's four to eight we are! Oh, you'll all come to the four after a while!"

"No, sir!" exclaimed Murray, drawing himself up, and looking dignified. "I do not change in that way, sir. From what the Judge said I perceive clearly that I was wrong in thinking that a verdict of manslaughter could be found according to the evidence in this case. The deed was not committed without premeditation, and there was no sudden excitement. No, sir, I am for a verdict of murder in the first degree."

Then Murray, who had risen at the first of his speech, sat down perfectly satisfied; at last he had created a sensation.

"Nine to three, then," Hamersley remarked.

"Gentlemen, I think that yon ought to come round to our views upon this subject," Kemble said, mildly. He was the watchmaker and had not spoken before.

"Suppose we compromise upon a verdict of murder in the second degree," Ramsay (clerk) suggested. "He probably would be sentenced to imprisonment for life; and really, although the man deserves it, I think that I should prefer not to hang him."

"And your opinion, sir?" Ramsay addressed the junk-man.

"Dis shentleman speaks for me," replied Nitchie.

"As there doesn't seem to be any prospect of our agreeing upon a verdict, I suppose that we will have to remain here until the Judge's patience is worn out," Hamersley exclaimed in disgust.

"We're booked for the night, then!" Egbert (carman) exclaimed. "I hope that you're satisfied—you fellow in the corner there. This is all your doing. You ought to be locked up for a week, and fed on bread and water."

"Oh, don't say any thing about eating!" Delap, the painter,

cried. "The Judge is riled, and if we don't fetch in a verdict we'll get no square meal until we're discharged to-morrow, and it's all your fault, young feller!"

Blake never heeded their angry words or looks, but gazed at them stolidly.

"I hope you'll be half-starved before morning!" growled Jones.

Then a dim sort of smile crept slowly over the face of the obstinate juror.

"I'll not go hungry," he said, and then deliberately drew a huge Bologna sausage from his pocket, and held it up to the view of the rest.

"Oh!" yelled the astonished jurymen in a sort of chorus.

Blake replaced the sausage in his pocket, and surveyed his fellow-jurors placidly.

"Gents!" cried Delap (the painter), springing excitedly to his feet, "if we're locked up here until morning all on account of this slab-sided galoot, and he attempts to chew that compound of boiled dog while I have to go hungry, I'll just mount onto my hind legs and comb his wool for him if they send me up to the Island fur a month fur it!"

A dim look of alarm came over Blake's dull features at the angry words of the excited Bowery Boy, and secretly he began to wish he had kept the sausage in his pocket.

Time wore on; the gas was lighted, yet the jury were no nearer an agreement than before. Arguments were wasted upon the three obstinate jurors, who stood out so sturdily for the prisoner's innocence of the charge brought against him.

At last Hamersley, perceiving that there was no possible prospect of the jury agreeing, sent word to the Judge to that effect.

His Honor was savage; he had missed his regular dinner hour, and for no purpose.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BLAKE'S REASON.

TIRIED and worn out the jurymen looked as they filed into the box.

The court-room was lit up, and all the spectators stared anxiously upon the twelve men who held the fate of Gentleman George in their hands.

The Judge alone knew how unsatisfactory the result of the jury's deliberation had been.

And then, when the foreman, Hamersley, rose in answer to the question, and announced that the jury had been unable to agree, a little murmur of astonishment followed.

Sternly the Judge ran his eyes over the faces of the jurymen as he put the question to the foreman: did he think that they could agree upon a verdict if they were allowed more time to deliberate upon the matter? Hamersley instantly replied that in his judgment there was no possible chance of their agreeing upon a verdict, and the faces of the rest of the jurymen plainly indicated that they agreed fully with the opinion of their spokesman.

Then, with a few biting, sarcastic words, the Judge dismissed the jury, and the trial of Gentleman George was ended.

Great was the disgust of the District Attorney—a feeling that was shared by Judge Bruyn, who had really done nearly all of the hard work of the trial, and who confidently expected that the prisoner would be convicted of murder in the first degree. Of the prisoner's guilt he had no doubt. In some mysterious way, not warranted by the evidence, he found that his judgment had been influenced against the society brigand. As a general thing he regarded a law trial as a game of chess wherein he might exhibit his skill, and when the contest was over he cared nothing as to the fate of the chessmen. But, in this affair, almost before he was aware of it, he found himself regarding the prisoner in the light of a personal enemy—one whom he had sworn to hunt down into his grave.

And when after the trial was ended, the Judge sat in his library at midnight—he had escorted Miss Desmond home that evening in company with Medham—and thought over the events of the trial and the respite of the prisoner, he caught himself muttering that it was not for long, and that sooner or later he would have Gentleman George by the hip, and either cast him into the snaky grip of the hangman's hempen noose, or into the State prison for life.

And then the question came up in the Judge's mind why he wished evil to Gentleman George.

The wily, subtle lawyer and slippery politician juggled with himself; accustomed to hoodwink the world, he tried to deceive even himself.

"He's a rascal, and deserves to be hung!" he exclaimed aloud, and then to the mind of Bruyn came the thought of the strange resemblance that the prisoner bore to some one that he had once known.

"I must have been very familiar with the person, whoever it is, or else the resemblance would not strike me so strongly. Twenty times to-day at least have I caught myself looking at that man and wondering who on earth it was that he looked like. It is very strange indeed. I'll have to hang him though for all that."

And with this reflection the Judge went to bed.

Naturally, the morning papers of the day after the trial of Gentleman George had ended, contained a full account of the proceedings, and not only that, but the industrious reporters had succeeded in "interviewing" most of the jury, and so

full report of nearly all that had taken place in the jury-room was given freely to the public. And the journals, too, had commented in very plain terms upon the course pursued by the three obstinate jurymen.

Spence was in a fever of passion about the terms applied to himself and the other two who had stood out for the prisoner's innocence, and openly proclaimed that if he could only kill a newspaper-man he should die happy.

The comments of the outspoken journals did not trouble Blake or Nitchie much, for they never took the trouble to read the newspapers at all.

And the prying reporters, too, had found hard nuts to crack when they attempted to extract information from either of the two foreigners.

Nitchie was polite but reserved; Blake was dull and said nothing at all.

Gentleman George was sent back to his cell, and he slept better that night than he had done since he had entered the gloomy portals of the Tombs.

The next morning the eminent Three-Decker called upon him. He found George perusing the morning papers.

The lawyer was in excellent spirits.

"Reading an account of the trial, eh?" the counselor said.

"Yes."

"That fellow Blake stood out like a Trojan, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"By the way, George, between you and me and the bed-post," said the lawyer, sinking his voice confidentially, "how much did it cost you to fix him?"

"Nothing at all!" exclaimed George in astonishment; "why, did you think that I had tampered with him?"

"Well, I had an idea that way," replied the lawyer, who was considerably mystified. "He refused to reason upon the subject at all. The *Sun* comes right out and declares the jury were tampered with, of course not giving names, and the *Times* hints pretty strongly that it thinks so too."

"Yes, I have read the article in the *Times*; but now, how are we?"

"Well, George, the prospects are that we can push your case off for a year or so, and perhaps get you released on bail. Have to wait, you know, until the interest in the affair dies out and the newspapers get howling after some one else. Ah! George, in the good old time we had a ring through the noses of nearly all these newspaper fellows, and we used to make 'em sing a different tune. Keep your spirits up, though; the old Judge won't have you in his clutches next time, I hope, and we'll get a fairer show for our money. By-bye," and the ponderous counselor withdrew.

Hardly had he gone when Hero, George's wife, came in.

Hero had changed a great deal; she had grown thinner and paler, and it was plain to be seen that the trial of Gentleman George was killing the gentle, loving woman, the partner of his sorrows.

"Good-morning, my dear!" exclaimed George, rising and kissing her. "You see that I am not done for yet, no journey up the river or chance to dance upon nothing for a good six months yet, and the counselor thinks that in time, he may be able to get me out on bail. Have you read an account of how the jury stood?"

"Yes."

"The obstinacy of that dull-looking fellow saved me; the chances are that the other two would have agreed upon murder in the first degree if they had had the whole ten solid against them."

"It was cheap at fifty dollars, wasn't it?" Hero asked.

"What was cheap?" George exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Why, that man's obstinacy."

"What has fifty dollars to do with it?"

"Simply that he understood that if the jury disagreed, if you were acquitted, it would be fifty dollars in his pocket!" Hero replied.

"Oho!" George cried, admiringly; "you managed to reach the fellow then and 'square' him!"

"Yes."

"How did you do it? He seemed a stupid sort of donkey to get at."

"Through his sweetheart. As soon as he saves up money enough to open a grocery store he is to be married. I discovered the girl, a shrewd, grasping German. She jumped at the offer at once; fifty dollars was a large sum. What did either she or her lover care about justice as long as they were not troubled? I gave the girl twenty-five dollars, and agreed to give her the other twenty-five at the end of the trial, if you were not found guilty."

"By Jove! you are a jewel of a woman!" cried George, putting his arms around her exultingly.

"And yet, you have ceased to love me," she said, reproachfully, but submitting to his caress. "You love this actress, Miss Desmond; I know all about it now; and you have a rival too—Judge Bruyn, the man who did his best to have you hung because he wants this golden-haired doll for himself. Her love came near destroying you, while mine was your salvation."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ANSWER.

The actress, leaning on the back of the chair, unconsciously assuming an attitude that was grace itself, looked with a frowning face upon the determined man. She did not answer

the question that he had put, though; but silence was as fruitless as her earnest protest that she was not the woman that Neil Jemmison sought.

"Come, madam, answer my question," Jemmison said, sternly. "What has become of my child?"

The eyes of the actress flashed fire, and with an imperious bearing, she drew her little form up to its full height.

"It is useless, I perceive, to attempt to reason with a madman!" she exclaimed, angrily. "For the last time I tell you that I am not the person whom you seek. My name is not and never was Lina Aton. I never saw you before in all my life, and I sincerely trust, now that I have seen you, I shall never be obliged to suffer the pain of a second interview with you."

Jemmison, paying no heed to the angry and scornful words of the woman, advanced toward her.

"My child!" he cried, sternly, and with an angry menace visible in both his voice and manner, "tell me where she is, if she is living; or, if dead, where her bones rest. Tell me, or it may be the worse for you. You are a bold, heartless woman, and now that you are upon the top round of the ladder of fame, that the cup of triumph is at your lips, it would be a righteous act for any hand to dash the cup from the lips and to shake the ladder until you fall again into the mire from whence you came."

"Leave my room, you insolent ruffian!" exclaimed the actress, shutting her little white teeth closely together, and pointing defiantly toward the door. "I will no longer submit to your impertinence. If you do not instantly depart I will send for the police; possibly a few hours' detention in a station-house will bring you to your senses."

"That is an excellent idea," Jemmison said, dryly, and with the words, he helped himself to a chair and sat down.

Miss Desmond surveyed him in anger and amazement blended. The conduct of the man puzzled her.

"Proceed, madam," he continued; "send for the police, or, if you desire it, I myself will give the order to your servant."

Just a single gleam of fire came from the eyes of the woman; it was in her heart to kill the man who faced her so calmly and so stubbornly.

"Sir, will you be satisfied with my denial and leave my apartment? I do not desire to be obliged to press a charge against you before a police magistrate!"

"And I, for my part, am quite willing that the officers of justice should come," Jemmison replied. "And as to answering any charge made by you, I fancy that it will trouble you a great deal more to answer to the accusation that I shall bring against you when once we are before the bar of justice."

Just a light shade of anxiety passed rapidly across the charming face of the actress, but then in a moment it was succeeded by a grimace of contempt.

"I suppose you will repeat the absurd statement you have just made to me," she said, contemptuously; "you will declare that I am your runaway wife; that twenty or forty years ago—one is as likely as the other—I absconded from you and took your child with me. And even supposing it is all true—that I am the woman you say I am, I think I know enough of the law to be assured that I cannot be troubled for any acts like those I have just spoken of."

"Now I am quite sure that you are Lina Aton!" Jemmison exclaimed. "A woman who had never run away from her husband would not be so fully informed in regard to the law bearing upon her offense."

Miss Desmond's lip curled, but she did not speak.

"You think that legally I cannot trouble you?"

"I have nothing to do with you at all in any way, sir," the actress replied disdainfully; "but to answer the question you have just put, I do not think it requires a great deal of legal knowledge to guess that no woman can be troubled much for leaving her husband whom she dislikes."

"Quite aptly put," Jemmison said, reflectively; "it is rather odd, when you come to consider it, that a wife can leave the man who supports her, and who, to a certain extent, is responsible for her debts, and who cannot dispose of a single bit of property without her signature, although she may never have contributed to earning said property, and that the husband is perfectly helpless to restrain his wife or to compel her to return to him."

The actress listened impatiently to this reflection upon the laws of "Our Country," and apparently did not feel at all interested in the subject.

"Now, sir, will you go away, and not subject me to any more annoyance?" she exclaimed, fretfully.

"I haven't got through with the legal question yet," he replied, placidly.

Miss Desmond gave just a little start of surprise, and again her face grew dark with rage. Her unwelcome visitor was not disposed of yet.

"Your legal knowledge is so very extensive upon this subject of husband versus wife, that really I hesitate to inform you there is a way in which a husband may detain an absconding wife, and, for a time, at least, put her in a very unpleasant position," Jemmison said, coldly, but with a latent touch of sarcasm in his voice.

The actress cast a searching glance upon her unwelcome visitor. It was evident that she was puzzled.

"The law is a very curious affair," Jemmison continued, in his cold, unimpassible way. "I once heard a very able legal gentleman say that he defied human brains to frame a law he could not find a way to evade. To illustrate, I

will take our own case. I, before a magistrate, accuse you. First, you are my wife who fled from me years ago, bearing my child with you; that amounts to nothing in the eyes of the law; second, I accuse you of larceny, stealing valuable articles not only belonging to me, but to others, and on that charge I can hold you."

Just for a moment the little white teeth of the actress clenched tightly together. She felt that she was no match for the man who sat before her. Wildly and desperately she sought for some way to break the net which Jemmison's skillful hand had cast around her, but wit and artifice alike failed her.

"Well, what is it to be?" Jemmison asked, after a long silence; "will you call the police or answer the question I asked?"

"You have me at a disadvantage, sir," Miss Desmond exclaimed, angrily; "you fully understand how such a charge as you would bring against me would hurt my professional reputation. Again and again I deny that I am the woman you seek."

"Let that point go; answer me as to the child."

"I can only answer that I have no child living; will that content you?" the actress asked, desperately.

Jemmison rose from his seat and advancing to the actress looked her full in the eye.

"You swear that you speak the truth?" the "Doctor" demanded, impressively.

"As I hope for mercy hereafter!" Miss Desmond replied, earnestly.

Jemmison's lip curled as he turned away. A woman who had not hesitated to commit the worst of crimes in this life was not likely to be troubled much about the life to come.

Jemmison's hand was on the door when the actress spoke.

"Am I to understand that you are satisfied, and that I will not be troubled by you again?" she asked.

"That depends," replied Jemmison, evasively.

"Upon what?"

"Whether you have spoken the truth or not."

"I have, so help me Heaven. Ellen Desmond—or Lina Aton, if you will—has no child living on earth that bears a single drop of your blood in its veins!" she exclaimed.

"I hope so."

And with the simple sentence, Jemmison quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MEDHAM'S INFORMATION.

JUST six months from the day that the jury came into their box and their foreman announced that they could not agree upon a verdict in the case of the People vs. George Dominick, that now noted individual was released on bail.

Quite a strong pressure had been exerted in certain quarters in behalf of Gentleman George, or, as a sensation morning daily termed him, the "New York Modoc." The health of the prisoner, too, had been seriously affected by his protracted stay in the grim edifice built over the "filled-in" Collect Pond, commonly styled the Tombs, and a half-score of doctors had duly visited and examined the "said George Dominick," and certified that, in their opinion, the life of the prisoner would be seriously endangered by a long stay in his prison-cell; then they pocketed their liberal fee and retired, fully satisfied that they had done their duty to society by aiding to set free a red-handed murderer.

A wonderful metal is gold, or the bank-note its representative, for it buys both brains and honesty.

A large and powerful body of men backed the cause of the criminal.

The dangerous classes—not unaptly termed the Modocs of New York—aided Gentleman George. From the genteel bank-robber down to the veriest burglar who "realized" his "stake" from the drunken wanderer by aid of the slung-shot or bludgeon, all understood that to hang a man for killing a policeman in the exercise of his duty would be setting a most dangerous precedent.

So money was freely used, and, what was still more powerful—to the shame of New York justice must it be said—political influence was brought to bear, and all to set Gentleman George free.

Six months' work and the end was attained; a bail-bond of five thousand dollars was given and George Dominick walked forth a free man. True, the consequences resulting from his desperate act still hung over him, but in this case 'twas no single strand of hair that restrained the avenging fall of the sword of justice; on the contrary, the steel blade of the blind goddess was tied up by legal quibbles, fine as silk in texture, yet strong as chains of steel—cobwebs to the eye, but as malleable iron in strength.

No fiction this plain detail of how a criminal may escape from the clutches of our New York law if he has wealth and political influence to aid him and there is a shadow of doubt as to his guilt.

The records of New York tell how policeman Anderson was foully murdered, a few years ago, and the Italian assassin escaped all punishment except a lengthened detention during his trial. Interest in the case died away, and possibly not one in a hundred who noted the crime and the attempt to convict the criminal, know at this day how the affair ter-

minated. Comment is useless, except perhaps to chronicle the report that the assassin is now said to be holding a high rank in the army of Italy.

George, free, returned at once to his old haunt in Market street, and there he began to look around him with intent to discover some easy way to help himself to somebody else's funds.

Dominick, though thin and pale from his prison life, was worth a dozen dead men yet.

It was the wife of the criminal, not the criminal himself who was near to the grave.

Patient, suffering Hero had not many months of life left. She loved her husband, cold, heartless villain though he was, and the discovery she had made that the actress, Ellen Desmond, was her rival, was a death-stroke to her.

Night and day she brooded over the wrong, and though she did not give vent to her feelings in words, yet keen-sighted George quickly discovered her trouble and was not long in guessing the cause of it. It troubled him but little, though; his creed was Self, and as long as he was not attacked, he was content.

During the six months Miss Desmond had finished her engagement in New York, and departed to win fresh laurels in other cities.

Neil Jemmison had calmly pursued the even tenor of his way. He was fully satisfied that the actress had spoken the truth in regard to the death of his child, and he troubled himself no more in regard to her. It would have taken a keen and careful observer to have detected in the self-possessed ward of wealthy Neil Jemmison, the poor waif who had been turned into the street by the wretched denizens of the Water street slums. And the "Doctor," in attending to Molly's education, and watching the almost daily advancement that she made, found enough to do to prevent the time from hanging heavy on his hands.

About a week after the day upon which the cold gray walls of the Tombs had given Gentleman George back again to the world, Jemmison, passing down Broadway, encountered Medham, Miss Desmond's business manager, standing in front of the Grand Central Hotel.

Medham recognized Jemmison at once. His countenance brightened up, for the sagacious theatrical speculator was very much in the dumps as Jemmison came along.

"How d'y-do?" Medham said, extending his hand.

"Quite well, I thank you; how are you?"

"Oh, only middling," Medham replied, with quite a sorrowful air.

"What's the matter?"

And as Jemmison put the question he had a presentiment that he was to hear something in regard to the woman who had been so intimately connected with his early life, and, in truth, he had halted to speak to the jolly business-manager for the purpose of learning how the actress got along.

"The best speculation that I ever got into it has bu'sted all to thunder," Medham said, in a tone that betrayed deep and settled melancholy.

"Ah, Miss Desmond, I suppose."

"You bet!" replied Medham, tersely.

"What is the trouble?"

"Just like all females!" exclaimed the business-manager. "Just as soon as you get 'em started right and commence to make money, then they get up and dust."

Jemmison understood what Medham meant, although the sense of the language might be considered a little obscure.

"Got another manager, I suppose?" Jemmison suggested.

"Yes, he knocked me higher than a kite on terms."

"Couldn't you afford to make a more liberal offer?"

"Oh, she doesn't act any more now."

"Indeed!" Jemmison was rather astonished at this intelligence.

"No; she's going to be married."

"Married! Is it possible?"

Medham, occupied by his own thoughts, did not notice Jemmison's amazement.

"Yes, got a regular star engagement, too; it's a ten-strike, I tell yer!" Medham exclaimed, emphatically. "I saw how the cat was jumping when she was playing here in New York. I knew it was no use to interfere. You can't hold a professional to an engagement, if they choose to break it, if you have forty contracts. The old man acted fair, too—gave me a thousand dollars to release her. That's all clean cash, of course, but I stood to make five times that amount between now and next season with her."

"Who is she going to marry?" Jemmison felt quite curious.

"Judge Bruyn. You probably know him; he's an old New Yorker."

"Yes, I know him," Jemmison observed; his mind was in a maze. He knew the Judge very well by report and sight although not personally acquainted with him.

"He got after her when she was playing here at Niblo's. It's a big thing for her, for they say he's worth a million. I egged it on all I could myself, for I didn't want to stand in her way; and besides, I saw that I wouldn't be able to hold her much longer. I was the ladder that had boosted her up, and, now that she had got a fair hold, I knew the odds were ten to one she'd shake me."

"When does the marriage take place?"

"Some time this week, I believe. I haven't seen her for about ten days, when I gave her up her contract."

"I am quite astonished," and with the remark Jemmison walked on, strangely undecided in his mind.

CHAPTER XL.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR VISITOR.

WALKING slowly along, Jemmison debated as to what course of action he should pursue in regard to the woman who called herself Ellen Desmond, but whom twenty years before he had wedded under the name of Lina Aton.

Should he let her go on and consummate the marriage with Judge Bruyn, or should he visit that gentleman and make known to him the true history of the dashing and handsome actress?

It was repugnant to Jemmison's better nature that his runaway wife should flaunt it thus boldly before the world.

"She is utterly reckless and unprincipled," he muttered, communing with himself as he paced along down crowded Broadway, for the time totally unconscious of the people who elbowed him. "She cares nothing for the past; she will wed this man with a lie on her lips, perhaps ruin all his life, and from what I have heard of the Judge he is a pretty good sort of a man. If I thought she would lead a better life in the future than she has in the past, I would not open my lips to stay her triumph; but if, as I fear, the wealth that she will receive will only seem to her as the natural reward of her schemes and reckless disregard of goodness and honesty, then justice demands that I should speak—that I should tear away the garb of lies she wears and expose her to the man she is about to deceive in all her native deformity. What shall I do?"

And then, as if his words had power like the magic spells of the wizards in the fables of old, to conjure forms from the misty deep, up Broadway, sitting by Judge Bruyn in an elegant carriage came the woman whose fate Jemmison thought he held in his hands.

Jemmison stopped abruptly.

The actress, robed in silks and laces, and bearing the wealth of a kingdom, almost, in the jewels that adorned her person, caught sight of the dark, stern face of the man standing motionless as a statue upon the pavement.

If Ellen Desmond—or Lina Aton, whichever was her true name—had known that the bolt of death would have followed the action a moment after, she could not have resisted the desire to smile, mockingly, in the face of the man—the only being in all the wide world who had ever caused a thrill of fear to shake her heart.

And smile she did in triumph and mockery. It was as a defiance to Neil Jemmison to do his worst.

Jemmison, knowing the nature of the woman so well, understood the meaning of the scornful glance.

The carriage rolled on, but Jemmison remained motionless, following the vehicle with his eyes.

Before it had gone a dozen yards up Broadway, his mind was fully made up as to the course that he should take.

"I'll see Bruyn to-night and reveal to him a little of the past life of this smiling fiend!" Jemmison ejaculated, with a determined air.

And, acting at once upon the impulse, he retraced his way up the street, and entering the first drug-store that he came to, procured a directory in order to learn the residence of Nicholas Bruyn, lawyer.

The information was soon obtained, and at eight o'clock that evening, Neil Jemmison, ascending the steps of the ex-Judge's mansion, sent in his card, coupled with a request that an interview be granted him.

The card was delivered to the Judge in the presence of the actress.

Bruyn was seated in an easy-chair in his library, glancing over the evening paper, while the actress, dressed in a most exquisite wrapper, which became her wondrously, was seated on an ottoman by his side, an illustrated book open upon her lap, but she was paying far more attention to the Judge's face than to the volume upon her knees.

It was a very pretty picture indeed, the solid, middle-aged, scheming man of the world and the delicate, childlike woman; another Eden as it were, waiting but for the appearance of the Father of Evil to breed discord and dismay, and for the nonce it was probable that the dark-faced, resolute doctor would assume the role of the Evil One.

"Ah, I don't know him," the Judge murmured, as he looked at the name inscribed upon the little square of pasteboard the servant had handed him. "Did he mention anything regarding his business?" The Judge had a suspicion that it was some needy politician come to "strike" him for a loan.

"No, sir; he only said that he wished to see you on very particular personal business, and begged that you would be kind enough to grant him a private interview."

"Not one of the usual rounders, I hope," the Judge said, suspiciously.

"Oh, no, sir; he's quite a gentleman." The servant had been a considerable length of time in the Judge's service and had become pretty well used to the irrepressible "bummers" who haunt the portals of prominent politicians.

"I suppose that I will have to see him; show him into the parlor, and, by the by, just keep your eyes upon him until I come down; these gentlemen sometimes walk off with the portable articles handy."

"I don't think that he's that kind of a man, sir," the servant replied; "but I'll look out for him." Then he withdrew.

"You must excuse me for a few minutes, my dear," the Judge said, rising and tossing his newspaper and the card of the visitor upon the table together.

"And do you have to receive every unknown visitor who

chooses to call upon you?" the actress asked, in astonishment.

"Well, yes," the Judge replied, slowly; "a man in public life is expected to receive his adherents—in fact, he must get out of politics if he wishes to become a hermit or to deny himself to all but intimate friends and business acquaintances. A vote's a vote whether cast by a gentleman in broadcloth or a vagabond in rags; it won't do to offend either. If a man wants a favor that is either beyond my power to grant or that I am unwilling to bestow upon him I must get rid of the matter politely. After a man's elected, though, he makes up for the trouble that it costs him," the Judge added, with a grim sort of humor.

"Will you be detained long?"

"I guess not, although I can't possibly imagine what this man wants; it may be a reporter, though, for some of the newspapers come to 'interview' me in regard to my opinion upon some public matter. I did not think of that before, that is the probable explanation, but the card does not give the name of any journal."

"Get rid of him as soon as you can, I am so lonely without you," the woman said, throwing a world of expression into both face and voice.

"Yes, my dear," the Judge replied, and then he departed. As he closed the door behind him, and descended the stairs, there was a peculiar expression upon his face. The Judge had seen a good deal of womankind in his career through life, and it was just possible that the actress had rather overdone her part, in giving utterance to the affectionate remark at parting.

After the Judge's departure, the woman sunk down again upon her low seat by the table.

"Oh, how hard it is," she murmured. "I have played many a part in my time, but none as difficult as this. A single incantious word might betray me. If I can but carry it out to the end—" and then she paused suddenly, a thought occurring to her. "But, what will be the end, and when will it come? Ah! that is a very difficult question; one that I can not answer although I have asked it. Well, I am content to go on as I am, and wait for time to reveal the future. For the present I triumph, and that is quite enough for me."

And with the boastful vaunt upon her lips, her eyes, wandering vacantly over the table, caught sight of the little square of pasteboard that the servant had brought.

Carelessly, without a motive, not even curiosity, she took it up and glanced at the name imprinted upon the spotless surface.

A single glance she gave at the name of Neil Jemmison, and then for a moment the room swam round her; the very life-blood in her veins seemed chilled, even as with the icy fingers of grim death.

"Neil Jemmison!" she cried, rising with an unsteady motion to her feet; "and with the Judge here, beneath this roof! Oh! I am stifling!" and with trembling steps she hastened to the door, but halted there, her hand upon the knob.

CHAPTER XLI.

JEMMISON SPEAKS.

THE Judge entered the parlor and cast an inquiring glance at the gentleman who, at such an unusual hour, had requested an interview.

The servant, obedient to orders, had left the parlor-door open, and had remained in the entry, so that if the stranger belonged to the class of rogues denominated "entry thieves," he would not be able to escape with any plunder.

The Judge, at the first glance, saw that the servant had proved himself to be a man of discernment, and that the unknown was indeed a gentleman.

Jemmison rose at the Judge's entrance.

"Mr. Bruyn, I believe?"

"Yes, sir," the Judge replied.

"Will you have the kindness to grant me a private interview?" Jemmison asked.

"Business of importance?" the Judge said, in a tone of question.

"Very important, sir, and it intimately concerns you."

The Judge looked a little astonished, more at the manner of the speaker than at his words, but he instantly closed the parlor-door, motioned Jemmison to a chair and took one himself.

"Now, sir, we are alone; if you will have the kindness to proceed," the Judge said.

Jemmison hesitated for a moment; it was a delicate and awkward task that he had taken upon himself, and he knew not exactly how to begin, but after a moment's thought he spoke:

"Mr. Bruyn, although I have never had the pleasure of your acquaintance, still, as a prominent New Yorker, you are no stranger to me. I am about to make a disclosure to you that must inevitably wound you deeply, and I trust that you will believe me, when I say that the words I am forced to speak will probably pain me almost as much as they will afflict you. It is not malice or revenge that prompts my tongue; it is but simple justice."

The Judge looked decidedly astonished at this strange beginning, but he contented himself by simply nodding as if to encourage the other to continue in his speech.

"At first I have no doubt that you will consider you are listening to the words of either a rogue or a madman," Jemmison said, "but I am prepared to prove that every word I speak is true; all I claim from you is a careful consideration of what I am about to say. You are a lawyer and will soon see the weak points in my statement if there be any. I am about to touch upon a very delicate matter, but it cannot be avoided. Listen to, and consider my words, with patience."

The Judge was silent for a few moments. First he looked at the floor and caressed the ends of his long mustache; then he fixed a penetrating look upon the face of his visitor, but Jemmison never shrunk from the glance.

"Go on, sir," the Judge said, at last. "I will hear what you have to say, and give it due consideration."

"You are acquainted with a lady named Ellen Desmond, an actress by profession?"

The Judge started. This was a surprise indeed. He had not thought of the actress while puzzling his brain to guess the purport of the disclosure that was to be made to him.

"Yes, sir," the Judge rejoined. "Some few months since I made the acquaintance of an actress named Ellen Desmond."

"I was informed to-day that you designed to marry this lady."

"Ah!" The Judge prolonged the simple exclamation, and regarded Jemmison with a very peculiar expression upon his face.

"I suppose that report is true?"

"Excuse my looking at this matter in a legal light," Bruyn remarked, blandly; "but that is what we lawyers call a leading question. What is the object of the aforesaid question?"

"I will explain," Jemmison replied. "If the report is not true, and you do not intend to marry the woman, then I have nothing more to say; but if I am correct in thinking that you do intend to marry her, I can give you some information in regard to her."

The Judge sat silent, his eyes bent on the floor, and he pondered over Jemmison's words for quite a little time. He was evidently deeply perplexed, for his face wore an earnest, anxious expression, and there was almost a sad look upon it, something rare for stolid Nicholas Bruyn.

"I suppose you require me to answer your question before you can go on," Bruyn said, slowly.

"No, I do not require you to answer it," Jemmison replied, with emphasis. "You have doubtless guessed my report of this woman will not be to her advantage. I impart what I know to you, because I do not think it right that she should deceive you as to the past, but if you are not to enter into an intimate relationship with her, you have no right to hear, and I no right to say aught against her."

"Quite correctly put, sir," observed Bruyn, impressed by both Jemmison's words and manner. "I will be frank with you, sir. There is no person in the world who should know more of Miss Ellen Desmond than myself. Need I say any thing more to the point?"

"No, sir; and I will tell you all that I know of her. I will only relate facts, and leave you to draw your own inferences from them." Jemmison's voice and face both fully revealed how much in earnest he was.

"I trust that what you have to say is of your own knowledge," Bruyn said, taking advantage of Jemmison's pause. "I suppose you are fully aware that there is always more or less scandal about women who follow the stage for a living; and sometimes, as I know by personal cognizance, there is really no foundation of truth at the bottom of the matter."

"Be satisfied before I begin that I speak entirely of my own knowledge," Jemmison said, "and that what I am about to say no other person in the world, except the woman herself, could repeat."

"I am all attention, sir," the Judge remarked, leaning back in his easy-chair, and fixing his eyes full upon the face of his visitor.

"In the year eighteen hundred and fifty-three, just twenty years ago, in a milliner's shop on Division street, in this city, there worked a young girl of twenty-two or three, named Lina Aton. She was small in stature, petite in feature, and appeared more like a girl of fifteen or sixteen than one over twenty. This girl, in the month of April, in the year that I have mentioned, married a young medical student named Neil Jemmison."

"Yourself, I presume," interrupted the Judge, who remembered the name that had been inscribed on the card.

"Yes; a child was born to the young couple, and when it was about six months old, the mother fled, bearing the child with her."

"And the motive for the flight?" inquired the Judge, anxiously.

"The husband discovered that the mere child, apparently, whom he had married, was nothing more nor less than a desperate and daring adventuress; that she was not sixteen, as she had said, but twenty-two; that in every particular regarding herself, she had willfully and deliberately lied, and that there was a very strong probability that she had had two or three husbands before, and had not taken the trouble to obtain a divorce from any of them."

"Ah!" The Judge began to have an idea now of what the information was.

"Naturally after this discovery the woman had but one resource, to fly from the man she had deceived. It had only

taken a very few months to cure the infatuation on both sides."

"I should have thought that you would have been glad to get rid of her," the Judge remarked, sagely.

"Yes, but she carried the child with her, and for one reason only—to revenge herself upon me, for the natural love of the mother for its offspring she never felt."

"You pursued her?"

"Yes, but fruitlessly. Nineteen years, nearly, passed away before I again saw her, and then it was by accident; and in the interval she had greatly changed her appearance."

"Has this story any connection with Miss Desmond?" Bruyn asked, and as he put the question he fully understood what the answer would be.

"The actress Ellen Desmond is Lina Aton."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE STARTLING PROOF.

"Ah, oh!" The Judge caressed his chin with his hand thoughtfully for a few moments.

"You make this statement boldly," Bruyn observed, after quite a long pause.

"When a man is prepared to back up his statement, how else should he make it?"

"Quite true—quite true," the Judge murmured, absently.

"I happened to stroll into the theater where she was playing, some six months ago," Jemmison continued; "it was when she was performing in New York here. Of course, I had as little idea of seeing my wife, that was—who had deserted me years before—as of seeing a tenant of the tomb rise bodily from the grave. But the moment Miss Ellen Desmond came on the stage, I recognized her, despite the disguise she wore. Then I took measures to have an interview with her."

"And you succeeded?" the Judge inquired, his curiosity excited.

"Yes, although I had to almost force my way into her apartment, as she denied herself to me, and gave orders to her servant not to admit me."

"Well, did she acknowledge that she was Lina Aton?" The Judge felt decidedly interested.

"No; I did not care for that point; I sought her that I might learn the fate of my child."

"And she told you?"

"Yes; although of course denying that she was the woman that I took her to be, or that she had ever seen me before. She found that I would not go unless I was satisfied as to the fate of the child; threats and entreaties alike were vain, and so, at last, she said that she had no child living who had my blood in its veins."

"She threatened you?" the Judge said, musingly.

"Yes."

"In what way?—you must excuse my cross-examination; but of course you fully understand how important it is that I should know all that relates to this person," Bruyn said, in explanation.

"Question freely, sir," Jemmison replied. "She threatened to call the police, and have me arrested."

"A natural proceeding if you were incorrect as to her identity."

"And I on my part defied her to call in the officers, as I, too, could bring an accusation against her. She instantly replied that if she was Lina Aton—or Jemmison, rather—that the law was powerless to harm her for the offense of running away from me."

"A logical conclusion, by Jove!" exclaimed Bruyn, his brows contracting and his mouth tightening. "It seems, then, that Miss Desmond was posted as to the law's power over runaway wives?"

"So I remarked; and then I explained to her that if I could not hold her on that charge, I could for larceny, as in her flight she had carried away all the portable property she could get her hands on."

"Quite a shrewd legal trick," Bruyn remarked, dryly.

"Then she adopted a different tone, and gave me the information that I wished, protesting, though, to the last, that she was not the person that I said she was."

"Did you see her after that interview?"

"No; I had learned all that I wished to know. That was six or eight months ago. I cared nothing what became of the woman; but by an accident I learned to-day that you were about to marry her—"

The Judge made a wry face and Jemmison stopped; he imagined that the Judge wished to say something.

"Go on, sir," Bruyn said, hastily.

"I thought if the report were true, that it was my duty as a man that you should know what the past life of this woman has been. If she has acted fairly with you, you should already have heard all that I have just told from her own lips. Perhaps to her eyes her conduct may not appear quite so black as I have painted it. She may have good and sufficient reasons for all that she has done."

"Yes, yes, probably," the Judge murmured.

"I have told you all that I know, sir," Jemmison observed; "perhaps you would like proof as to certain points?"

"The identity of your wife, Lina Aton, that was; that is the

most important thing. How could you prove that, in a court of justice?" Bruyn asked.

"First by my oath as to her identity, although she has changed the color of her hair, and destroyed certain marks upon her body which might have led to her identification."

"If all this you say be truth, this woman has not only played a bold but a skillful game!" the Judge exclaimed, in amazement.

"Yes; and so skillfully has she covered up the traces, that it would really be a very difficult matter for me to prove in open court that she really is the person I know her to be," Jemmison said, slowly. "You are probably aware, Mr. Bruyn, that there are marks on the human body, sometimes relied upon in law-cases to establish a person's identity that can easily be removed by the chemist's art?"

"Indeed, I was really not aware of that," the Judge confessed; "no such case has ever come under my observation. To what marks do you refer?"

"Moles; of course you are aware that a mole is but an excrescence, and does not penetrate into the flesh."

"Certainly—of course."

"By means of a thread and a caustic preparation, a mole can be entirely removed, and without leaving any trace that there has ever been any such mark upon the person."

"That is quite reasonable," said the Judge, reflectively; and then all of a sudden the thought flashed upon him that he had relied upon finding a certain woman by means of moles curiously placed upon her body, a description of which he had furnished to a detective officer; and mentally he asked himself if one woman knew how to destroy such tell-tale marks, might not another of the sisterhood avail herself of a like means? "And this Miss Desmond does not have the moles upon her person that the Lina Aton, the milliner's girl, had?" the Judge questioned.

"No; she has removed them."

"At that one point she has beaten you then?"

"Yes; she has also changed the color of her hair. Once it was dark-brown, now she has bleached it to yellow."

"You have attempted a difficult task, I fear," the Judge remarked, shaking his head, gravely.

"No; for I have one strong proof."

"What is it?" all the lawyer instincts of the Judge had been roused into action.

"A picture of her taken just a month after we were married," Jemmison replied. "It is one of the old-fashioned daguerreotypes."

"That would be pretty strong proof if Miss Desmond looks like the picture, and you could take your oath that it was taken twenty years ago from your wife's face," the Judge said, weighing the point over deliberately as he spoke.

"That I could do," Jemmison replied; "and, as for the likeness, you shall judge as to that."

And as he spoke he drew the picture from his pocket.

"There is only one difference between Miss Desmond and this picture of Lina Aton," Jemmison observed, as he opened the case; "a mole on the left cheek is shown in the picture, but Miss Desmond's cheek does not bear any such mark."

"A mole on the left cheek!" exclaimed Bruyn, with strange abruptness, and sitting bolt upright in his chair as he spoke. "Has she moles anywhere else?"

"Miss Desmond, no; Lina Aton, two on the right wrist!" Jemmison answered, wondering at his sudden excitement.

"Great heavens!" cried Bruyn, nervously; "let me look at the picture!" and, as he spoke, he almost snatched it from Jemmison's hands.

A single glance the Judge gave at the fair young face, and then, with a gasp, sunk back in his chair.

Jemmison, alarmed, sprung to his assistance, but Bruyn with a great effort rallied himself.

"Don't be alarmed, sir!" he exclaimed. "Oh! I have been blind not to have seen it before!"

Jemmison wondered at the words.

"I am much obliged to you, sir," Bruyn continued; "and if you will leave your address I will communicate with you at some future time."

Jemmison understood from this that the interview was over, and penciling his address on a card, left the house.

sitting in the same position that she had occupied when he had left the room.

A quick, sharp glance the woman cast in his face, and there she read that the blow had fallen; but, with the resolution of despair, she concealed her anxiety and received him with a smile. The Judge's face grew graver still as he noticed the look, but his iron will never faltered.

Bruyn seated himself in his easy-chair, and, as he did so, his glance fell upon the card, lying upon the floor just where it had fallen from the nerveless hand of the woman when she had read Neil Jemmison's ominous name.

The Judge understood at once that she knew who had called upon him. The little circumstance gave him the opening he sought.

"I see, madam, that you know who my visitor was, and you can probably guess what his errand was to this house, although he had little idea that at present you were an inmate of it."

The woman had noticed the Judge's glance at the tiny bit of pasteboard, and understood how useless it was to attempt to deny that she had read the name inscribed upon it; the single term "madam," too, told her that her chance was but a desperate one, but it was a lion heart the woman bore within her breast, and she still smiled sweetly, although the blood was at fever heat within her veins.

"Yes, I have seen the person once," she said, with just a little curl of the lip, "and from the short conversation that I had with him, I should judge that he had escaped from some lunatic asylum."

"Well, to me there appeared to be a great deal of method in his madness!" the Judge exclaimed, bluntly.

Just for a moment the smile faded from the face of the woman and a lurid light shone in her eyes, but then she remembered how difficult a game she had to play, and how desperate her chances were, and, with a powerful effort, she curbed the rising anger that swelled within her heart.

"Possibly his story may appear plausible to you," she said, with great calmness; "I suppose that he repeated to you the same ridiculous story he told me when he forced himself into my presence."

"I presume so," the Judge answered, coldly; "and in order that the matter be fully understood, I will repeat his statement. In the first place, he states that when he first met you, some twenty years ago, you were called Lina Aton; that under that name he married you and—"

"It is needless to repeat his ravings!" the woman exclaimed, contemptuously, interrupting the Judge.

"It is necessary that a criminal should know the facts alleged against her," said the Judge, sternly.

"By heavens!" cried the actress, rising to her feet and casting a withering glance upon the stolid, stern-faced man, "is it possible that I am looked upon in the light of a criminal, and solely upon the unsupported word of this paltry fellow? If you had loved me with one little hundredth part of the passion which you pretended to feel for me, you would have stricken this wretch to the floor the moment he dared to asperse the character of the woman who has a right to your protection."

"Sit down, madam, and let us have no more of your theatrical nonsense!" exclaimed the Judge, sternly. "You are not now acting a part in a play."

"No, I am on trial—a criminal, I presume, from your tone," the actress replied, with biting sarcasm, sinking in the nearest chair.

"Not on trial, for you are already tried, judged and found guilty," Bruyn said, coldly and calmly.

The actress raised her eyebrows in pretended astonishment.

"Oh, indeed, and in your court do you convict upon the evidence of the complaining party? does the accused have no chance to answer—no opportunity to prove her innocence and show what a black-hearted liar the man is who seeks such a cowardly revenge?"

The blood of the actress was up; it swelled in every vein; anger flashed from her eyes, and her little white hands were clenched until the pink nails cut into the waxen-like flesh.

"Madam, it is useless to bandy words," the Judge said, impatiently. "I am perfectly satisfied that Mr. Jemmison has spoken the truth. I feel convinced that you are the Lina Aton who married and deserted him, years ago; and, moreover, I know that Lina Aton is not the only name you have been known by; and now, in conclusion, will you oblige me by putting on your hat and cloak and quitting this house. Your trunks shall be sent to-morrow to any place that you may designate."

The actress indulged in a little scornful laugh, and regarded the Judge with a look of defiance.

"You forget yourself, Judge Bruyn," she said, in a tone of contempt; "you can not order me out of this house; I am your legal wife, and whatever my past life may have been, at present I hold only that position."

"My wife, eh?" the Judge said, a peculiar look upon his stolid face. "Mr. Jemmison may have something to say about that. I doubt if you have ever taken the trouble to legally end your contract with him."

"He will have to prove that I am the woman he says I am!" she exclaimed, defiantly.

"And you, madam, will have to prove that I was ever married to you, and I fancy that that task will not be as easy as you think," the Judge retorted.

The actress started, and a feeling of horror crept over her. Eagerly in her mind she thought over the details of her marriage the day before but all seemed clear.

CHAPTER XLIII.

BRUYN'S DECISION.

THE Judge accompanied Jemmison to the door, bowed him out, and then closed the massive barrier after him.

Bruyn's usually florid face was deathly pale, and there was a nervous, restless twitching of the lips altogether foreign to the nature of the man.

From the front door Bruyn proceeded up-stairs to his bed-chamber, a front room on the same floor as the library.

So slowly did the Judge—a heavy, solid-built man—proceed up-stairs that his footsteps produced no sound.

In his room, the Judge went to a closet in one corner, took down a bottle of brandy and filled a tumbler brimming full. A moment he held it up to the light and watched the sparkle of the most potent product of the vine, and then, with a heavy sigh, swallowed the liquor at a single draught.

Was the stern, iron-willed man seeking false courage, and did he fear the interview which he had resolved to seek?

The brandy swallowed, the Judge straightened himself up and proceeded at once to the library. He found the lady

"I can do that!" she replied, triumphantly; "we were married by the Reverend Mr. Hattrick, pastor of the 10th German Reformed Church; I saw it on the door-plate!"

"Ah, indeed? Recall how the affair happened," he said, blandly. "We were to be married in a week, but, driving through a street, in the upper part of the city, I noticed the name of the minister on the door and suggested that we should go in and be married at once; you jumped at the idea and married we were. Now, then, find me the minister who married us, his wife and servant who witnessed the marriage, or any such thing, either in New York or elsewhere, as a 10th German Reformed Church."

The actress ground her teeth together and her breath came thick and hard.

"Oh, you are a fiend!" she cried.

"Yes, to the harpies who try to make me their prey," he answered, sternly. "I had a doubt of you, and so I arranged the Reverend Mr. Hattrick for your especial benefit. If you had proven to be a good and honest woman, my introducing you to the world as my wife, would have been a legal marriage according to the laws of the State; but now, you are nothing to me. Leave this house at once, and it will be well for you, if you are wise enough to accept your defeat without a struggle."

The woman rose slowly to her feet.

"I cannot curse you, for words and human wills seem powerless against you. You are not a man but a fiend. Twice I have failed, but the third time"—and she hesitated and ground her teeth together.

"The third time!" cried Bruyn, rising to his feet, white with passion; "if you ever cross my path again, I'll kill you if it cost me all I have in the world to get out of it."

Ten minutes later, the actress, homeless, stood in the street.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A DESPERATE SCHEME.

The night air was chill and it cut the woman to the bone despite the warm wrappings that she wore.

Just a little minute she stood and gazed at the house, the door of which had closed behind her forever; then, with a bitter, scornful laugh she turned away and walked slowly down the street.

"The time may come," she muttered; "patience, patience."

As she approached the street light at the corner, she examined her watch. The hands wanted ten minutes to eleven.

She halted irresolutely, uncertain where to go, and while deliberating upon the matter, a man roughly clad, with his coat-collar drawn up and his hat drawn down, came up to her.

"I thought that I could not be mistaken in that figure," he said.

The woman started; she recognized the voice in an instant; it was Gentleman George.

"Why, George, how strangely you are dressed," she said.

"Yes, I am on a little business trip to-night," he replied, with a light cough.

"A business trip?" she asked.

"Yes, but you musn't ask questions. What are you doing alone in the street at this late hour?"

For a moment the woman gazed intently in Dominick's face; a wild, visionary idea had flashed across her brain; an idea that would give her, if realized, the vengeance that she sought upon the man who had turned her so abruptly from his house.

"You are engaged in some unlawful act?" she asked.

"You musn't question me," he repeated.

"If you are in search of plunder, I can tell where you can make ten thousand dollars and without any risk," she said.

"The deuce you can!" George exclaimed, in utter astonishment.

"Yes, and you can also pay off a debt you owe."

"Explain."

"You are here for some object then?"

"Yes, but only to oblige a couple of friends, I am to keep watch outside a certain place to give warning if the police appear."

"Let that go and enter upon my plan!" she exclaimed, eagerly. "You remember the lawyer who assisted the District Attorney at your trial, and who labored so hard to convict you?"

"Yes, Judge Bruyn, curse him!" replied George; "I swore that when I got out of that infernal prison den I would be even with him."

"And now I give you the chance," she said. "The Judge's house is in the middle of the block. In his safe, which is in the library, he keeps ten thousand dollars worth of government bonds."

"How do you know that he does?" demanded George, suspiciously.

"Because I saw him cut off the coupons to-day."

"And what were you doing in his house?" George asked in astonishment.

"Yesterday I was married to Judge Bruyn."

"Eh?" George was bewildered.

"Yes, and to-night he turned me from his door because a man who hates me came and revealed some of my past life to him" the woman said, bitterly.

"But, if you are his wife, why did you not refuse to go?"

"Because his wits are keener than mine, and he so arranged it that I can not possibly prove the marriage. Now will you accept my offer; will you avenge both your wrongs and mine?"

"How avenge them?" asked George, and with a covert glance at the woman's face.

"There is only one way; this man seeks your life; take his," the actress hissed in George's ear.

A cloud came over the handsome face of the "Modoc," and he hesitated a moment before replying.

"But there may be a difficulty about that."

"None at all," she replied, fiercely. "It will be either your life or his, for he has sworn to hang you."

"Why?"

"Because he hates you. In some way—how, I know not—he discovered that you and I were intimate; that was the beginning of it, now his professional reputation is at stake."

"But how can I get into the house?" The "Modoc" was yielding to the tempter.

"I have a latch-key which he gave me yesterday and which he did not think to take from me. I know the interior of the house. The Judge's room is the front one on the second floor, the library is right back of it. From the street we can see when he turns down the light in his chamber, then we can enter the house, secure the bonds, and after that, with a single blow, satisfy our vengeance and remove from your path the only man who has the power to work you harm."

"I'll do it!" exclaimed George with sudden resolution. "I hate this man and I want the money."

"Here is the latch-key!" cried the woman, with feverish haste, pressing it into his hand.

"All right; I must see the friends I spoke of and tell them that I can not assist them."

"How long will that take?"

"Only a half-hour; I'm to meet them at the corner beyond, at half-past eleven."

"It must be near that now."

"Yes; as soon as I get through, I'll come back and meet you in front of the door."

"It is the one with the gas-light in front."

"Yes, I'll not be long." George hastened along up the street, leaving the woman a prey to the wildest emotions. Revenge seemed almost within her grasp.

Slowly she crossed to the opposite side of the street so that she could obtain a better view of the house. And as she stood upon the corner she saw the light grow dim in the Judge's bedroom—proof that he had retired to rest.

A fierce gasp of joy came from the lips of the woman.

"Soon he will sleep, and from that sleep wake to meet everlasting fires!" she muttered.

And as the actress stood upon the corner, gloating over the vengeance that seemed so near, a dark-robed woman came with swift and noiseless steps from the darkness and touched her on the shoulder.

The actress, absorbed in her gloomy thoughts, had not noticed the approach of the second person, until she felt her light touch upon her shoulder.

Turning, she looked with astonishment into the pale face before her.

"You do not know me?" the strange woman questioned, her eyes blazing with almost supernatural light, and a hectic flush burning in a little pink spot in each cheek.

"No," replied the actress, coldly, withdrawing a step from the questioner, whom she imagined to be either under the influence of liquor, or else bereft of reason.

"I know you, though, to my sorrow," the new-comer said, mournfully. "My name is Hero; I am the wife of George Dominick, and you are the bold, bad woman who has taken my husband from me."

"It is false!" exclaimed the actress, scornfully. "Were you married to George Dominick three years ago?"

"No," replied Hero, wondering at the question.

"Well, I was," said the actress, defiantly; "and no sooner were we fairly married than the officers burst into the room, arrested and carried him off, and from that time until I came to New York, about seven months ago, I neither saw nor heard of him. Then by accident he happened to meet me, and has used his knowledge of our empty marriage vows to extort money from me. I neither seek your husband nor want him."

"But you have made Judge Bruyn persecute him," said Hero, who was astounded at what she had heard, "and Heaven help you, guilty woman that you are, George Dominick is the son of Nicholas Bruyn!"

"The son of Judge Bruyn?" exclaimed the actress, in wonder.

"Yes; George's father told me the secret of his birth on his death-bed. George was then away, and I kept the knowledge from him; for I feared that he would despise me if he found out that he was the son of a rich man. George's reputed father, Dominick, was once a servant in the Bruyn family. The mother brought George and gave him to the care of the man who had deserted her; and he, cruel and heartless, permitted the child to be sent to the police-station, utterly denying that it was his. Dominick adopted the child himself; the mother's name was Celine Seaton."

"Oh, Heaven!"

Like the death-wail of a lost soul, the despairing cry rung out on the night air; then followed a stifled gasp, and the actress, clutching at her throat as though she were suffocating, sunk writhing and convulsed to the pavement.

Hero moved not a single step to assist her; motionless as a statue she stood, and glared out of her unnaturally bright eyes upon the form of the prostrate woman.

"It is but justice that she should suffer!" she exclaimed; and then she turned and walked rapidly away; but Hero little guessed how terrible a wound she had given.

CHAPTER XLV.

TOO LATE.

SECONDS lengthened into minutes, and they, too, flew rapidly by.

All in a tangled mass lay the beautiful woman, the shapely limbs twisted, and the bewitching face pressed to the cold stone pavement like a lowly earth-worm; no steps woke the echoes of the night, ringing along the pavement. Slowly, little by little, the senses of the woman returned. The dust of the pavement was pressed upon her white lips, that so often had given and received the pledge of love; the chill of death was upon the heart of the beautiful creature, who had been born for an angel, but had fallen far from that high estate.

Wildly she pressed her hand upon her forehead; the damps of death already were there. She glared around, striving to recall her scattered senses.

"It can not be reality; it is a horrid dream!" she murmured; but then, all of a sudden, the truth flashed upon her brain: "No, no; it is truth!" she exclaimed; "but it is not too late! —I can stop the fearful tragedy!"

With trembling limbs she arose to her feet, and hastened at once to Bruyn's house. Not a light was visible there; all was dark and silent as the tomb.

The actress looked up and down the street.

"Surely it is time he was here," she murmured. "How long did I lay in my faint, I wonder?"

Almost mechanically she pulled out the little jeweled time-piece and opened it. It lacked but a minute of twelve.

"Oh, merciful Heaven! if he should have come, and not finding me here, have entered the house!" she moaned in wild-est agony. "I can not bear the suspense longer. I'll rouse the house. Bruyn shall know all. Smiling, skillful fiend that he is, perhaps this last terrible knowledge may touch even his soul of ice!"

With reason tottering on its throne, the woman rushed madly up the steps, and pulled the bell. The answering peal rung loud and shrill within the mansion.

A few seconds she waited, but heard no sign of life within.

Three desperate tugs she gave the bell, and at the last the wire snapped.

Three times the bell pealed within, and then the sharp crack of a revolver-shot rung out clear on the still night air.

"Oh, Heaven!" she cried, with a wild shriek of agony, "I have awakened Bruyn, and he has discovered and shot him, or else George has killed his father! Oh, let me in! open the door—oh, you dreadful wood—break and let me in! help—murder!—help!" and with her tender, delicate hands she beat the door and strove with her nails to tear away the wood.

The woman was crazed with anguish.

Suddenly the door opened; a servant, half-dressed, pale and frightened, stood in the entrance-way, the sleep still in his eyes.

The woman bounded past him, and rushed up-stairs; fear lent her wings.

The door of the library was open, and the gas turned up.

Across the table, weltering in his blood, lay Gentleman George—the bonds upon the floor where they had fallen from his nerveless hand.

Judge Bruyn, in his bare feet, attired only in his pantaloons and undershirt, stood just by the door. Aroused by the sound of the bell, he had discovered that his keys had

been taken from his pocket; suspecting robbery, he had seized his revolver and hastened to the library. George attempting to escape had been shot to death without an instant's warning.

The "Modoc" had waited at the appointed place and finding that the woman did not come, he entered the house without her.

With a cry of anguish, the actress rushed into the room and threw herself upon the warm but lifeless body.

"He is dead, and you have killed him!" she cried, wildly, finding that the heart had ceased to beat. "Nicholas Bruyn, you have murdered your own son!"

"My son!" exclaimed the lawyer, doubtfully.

"Yes, your child and mine. I am Celine Seaton, the woman that you married years ago and then deserted for a richer wife, because you knew that I could not prove our marriage; the same trick you played upon me only yesterday. This is the child that I sent as a present to your new wife on your wedding-night, and whom your father consigned to the care of the police. The servant, Dominick, brought him up as his own. I sent him here to kill you to-night, not knowing the awful crime that I intended. I learned the truth, and then heaven, as a punishment for my sins, struck me down in a faint, and allowed the dreadful work to go on. Oh, heaven—oh, heaven!"

Passionately the woman kissed the lips once so red and now paling so rapidly.

"She is mad!" Bruyn exclaimed, turning to the group of horror-stricken servants, who, half-clad, had gathered timidly together in the entry-way. Bruyn was pale as a ghost, and his hand shivered like a leaf in the wind, and, as he turned, by some chance the hammer of the revolver, which the Judge had recocked, fell, and the ball, sped with a deadly aim, struck the woman full in the breast.

Up went her arms with a wild scream, and then with a low moan, she sunk down, supine upon the floor at the feet of the dead man.

"Oh, what a terrible accident!" exclaimed the Judge, evidently greatly shocked, for he trembled like a man in an ague-fit. "Poor woman, she was evidently crazy."

When the inquest was held, the servants, naturally, testified as to the "accident," and their belief that the woman was insane. No blame was attached to the Judge.

So carefully had Bruyn arranged his affairs that but a single servant in the house had seen the actress received there, and he was too well instructed to tell tales out of school.

Jemmison alone held the key which might have solved the mystery, and he did not care to have aught to do with the affair.

The woman who had cast a blight over his early life was dead, and now he was free to act his own pleasure. Molly Bawn, the waif of the streets, who had looked upon him in the light of a father, at last convinced that he did not bear that relationship to her, was only too glad to love him as a husband.

Hero did not long survive the tragic death of Gentleman George, and soon she found the rest that death alone can give to the broken-hearted.

Asty, her sister, in due time married the "fish-man," Billy West, much against her father's wishes, who would have preferred "a hard-handed workin'-man"—like himself.

After the tragic death of the "Modoc" by his hand, Judge Bruyn never seemed like the same man. He mixed more in politics than he had done for years, and also speculated heavily in stocks. His former luck seemed to have deserted him, for he was defeated in his political aspirations, and lost heavily in the stock-market.

New York was astonished one morning by the news that Judge Nicholas Bruyn had been found dead in his bed. An over-dose of opium, the doctors said; suicide, his creditors declared, when they came to wind up the Judge's affairs and found that his assets would not half pay his debts.

Perhaps, after all, Nicholas Bruyn's career was not a successful one.

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